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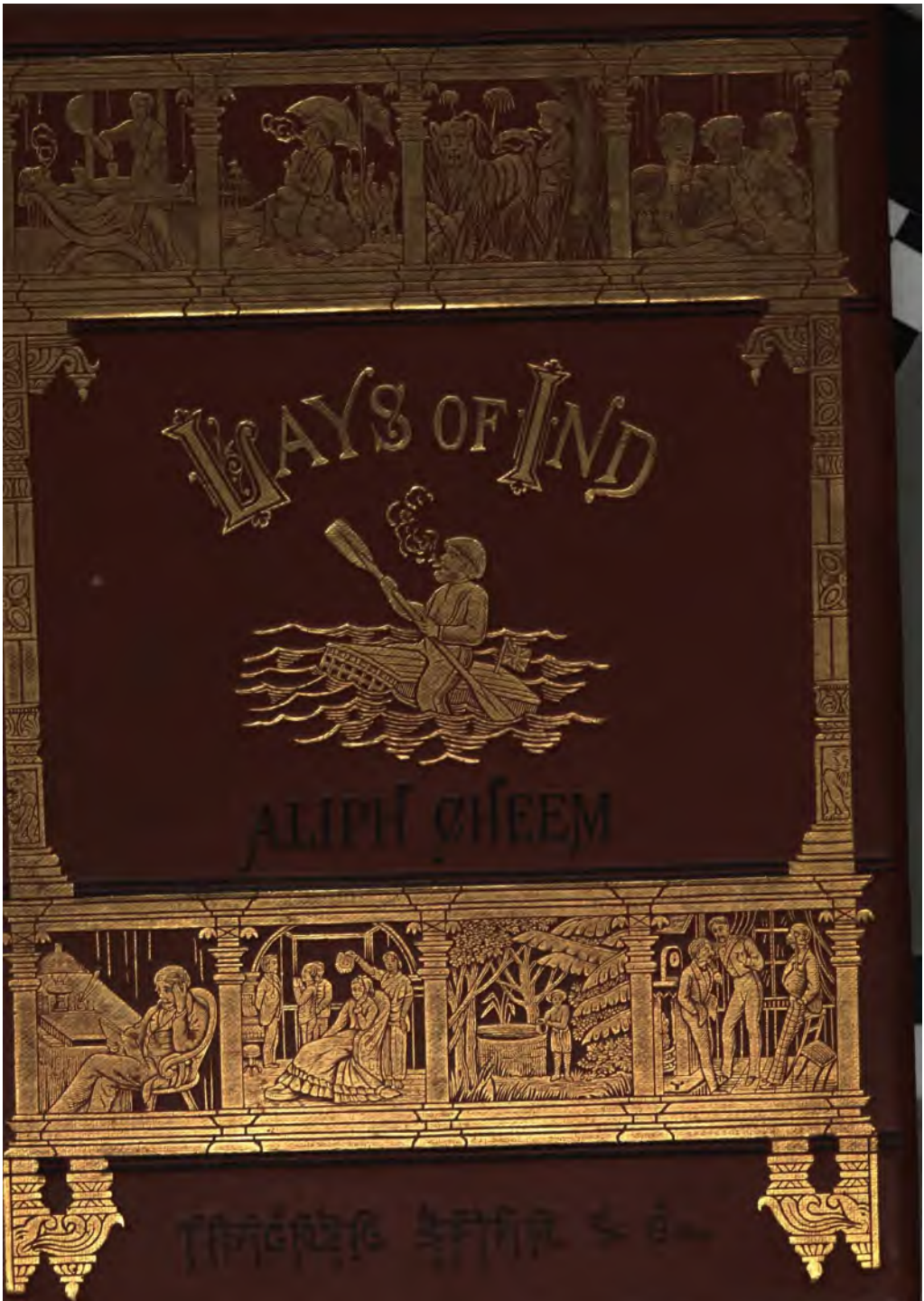
WAYS OF IND
ALIFH CHEEM

To dear Mabel from
her own "Petite"
June 24th
1899

LAYS OF IND.

LAYS OF IND.

BY

ALIPH CHEEM. [pseud.]

[i.e.] Yeldham, Walter

EIGHTH EDITION.

ILLUSTRATED BY

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1888.

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TO ANGLO-INDIAN FOLK
WHO CAN RELISH A LITTLE JOKE,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.
IF HAPLY TO ROUSE A SMILE,
OR AN IDLE HOUR BEGUILE,
THE MODEST TOME IS FATED,—
ACCOMPLISHED WILL BE THE DREAM
OF "YOURS TRULY,"

Aliph Cheem.

NOTE.

Readers who may not understand the Hindostanee words and Anglo-Indian expressions and allusions, occurring here and there in the verses, should refer to the Glossary at the end of the volume.

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Glossary for English Readers.

THE NAUGHTY NAUTCH.

THE Reverend McPherson believed that a nautch
Was a most diabolical sort of debauch;
He thought that that dance's voluptuous mazes
Would turn a man's brain, and allure him to blazes!—
That almond-eyed girls,
Dressed in bangles and pearls,
And other scant jims
Disclosing their limbs,

With movement suggestive
And harmony festive,
With fire in their eyes, and love on their lips,
And passion in each of their elegant skips,
As beauteous as angels, as wicked as devils,
Performed at these highly indelicate revels.

One day this said verecund Mr. McPherson
He chanced at a nautch to be present in person:
A Rajah had all the cantonment invited
To feast in his palace. The gardens were lighted
With fairy-like sheen
Of lamps, red and green,
White, purple, and yellow,
Some dazzling, some mellow;
There were flowers in mountains
About all the fountains,
And nice little tents
For ladies and gents,
With brushes and scents;
A pavilion of state
All arranged for the feast,
With service of plate
Worth a kingdom at least;
A profusion of rare
And exquisite fare,
From rice and pillaos
To truffles and grouse,
Which Fortnum and Mason so nicely prepare;
There were crackers and bonbons, and rhymes for the fair,
With every liquor we designate wine,
From the stuff of the Cape to the nectar of Rhine;

There were servants in splendid and fanciful garb,
To obey the behest of each lady and sahib,
To hand to the former magnificent posies,
Or phials of odorous attar of roses,
To dust the sahibs' boots,
Or present them cheroots,
To pilot them over each tortuous walk,
Which was covered with canvas as snowy as chalk,
And lead them right into the Rajah's divan
To make their salaam to the good little man.

The guests were assembled—the whole of the Station:
The Reverend McPherson's entire congregation
Were now in the Rajah's pavilion of state,
Exclaiming, "Oh, my! what a beautiful fête!"
There was General Smart,
With his hand on his heart,
Declaring, by Gad,
All he'd ever seen had
Been thrown in the shade
By the pomp now displayed.

There was fat Major Spruce,
His assistant A.-G.,
Vowing this was a deuce
Of a swell bobberee.

There was tall Colonel Byles,
Q.-M.-G. of the place,
With amazement and smiles
All over his face.

There was thin Captain Quill,
  The Judge-Advocate-Gen.,
And fierce Doctor Pill,
  Chief of medical men.

There was blithe Major Stock,
  I. O. M., full of chaff,
And a red-coated flock
  Of the rest of the Staff,
Who nodded, and swore
  There had never been such a
Tumasha before,—
  It was "Schandah—bote utcha!"

And then all the foot and the horse officers,
The Gunners and Staff Corps so glorious in spurs,
The Commissioner, with his Assistants—who all,
As is orthodox always, belonged to Bengal,—
And matrons and spins. last, but surely not least,
Declaring *nem. con.* 'twas a wonderful feast!

The Rajah he bowed, and he bowed, and he bowed,
Shaking hands as they came with the whole of the crowd;
And he led to a couch the Commissioner's wife,
And said 'twas the happiest hour of his life.
Then suddenly sounded a loud-clanging gong,
And there burst on the eyes of the wondering throng
  A bevy of girls
  Dressed in bangles and pearls
  And other rich jims,
  With fat podgy limbs,
  And bright yellow streaks
  All over their cheeks,

Enormous gold rings
And other queer things
In the ears and the nose,
On the ankles and toes,
Who shuffled, and beat
A strange time with their feet,
And sang a wild air
Which affected your hair,
While behind them a circle of men and of boys,
With tom-toms and pipes, made a terrible noise,
And retainers stood by, waving censer and torch;
And—the Reverend McPherson was in for a nautch!

The Reverend McPherson he said to his bride,
"Come, Ellen, sit doun vara close to ma side.
This rampin' and reelin' is sorrowfu' wark,
And it ill becomes *me* the braw witches to mark;
They may scrieve vara saftly, and fling vara weel,
But they're childer o' darkness, and kin o' the de'il!"
Said Ellen, "Oh, Dooglas, of course it is wrang,
But—there's nae ane that's bonnie thae witches amang.
You may just tak' a look, and I think you'll agree;
Sae don't turn awa', noo, and open your e'e."

The minister did
As his douce lassie bid;
The minister took
A pretty close look,
And the minister said,
With a shake of his head,
"If wi' lasses lik' thae, dear, Gehenna is graced,
I don't think the de'il has got muckle gude taste!"
The Reverend McPherson, relieved in his mind,
Examined the dancers before and behind:
He observed that their port was extremely discreet,
That they wore ample garments right down to their feet,
On their heads golden bosses, and plaits to their hair,
And that scarcely an inch of their bodies was bare;
That they postured, bobbed, whirligigged, wriggled like eels,
And all the time shuffled about on their heels,
Keeping time to the piper's and tom-tommer's strains
With the clink of their anklets of resonant chains,
Advancing, retiring, uplifting their arms,
Now mimicking joy, and now feigning alarms,
Now figuring love, now portraying disdain,
And doing it over and over again,

Till, after a good twenty minutes of play,
He wished the whole boiling would nautch it away.

But still they kept shuffling and spinning about,
And one of them, who was remarkably stout,
More splendaciously dressed—
Less opaque—than the rest,
Coming more to the front,
Bearing more of the brunt,
And forming the centre of every group —
In fact, the presiding *danseuse* of the troupe —
Appeared to be acting a tragical drama,
And worked herself into a state about "Rama;"
She'd a cloth of gold on her,
And jewels of sorts,—
She had been prima donna
At several Courts,—
She wore genuine rubies,
Presented by boobies,
Who thought that her dancing
Was something entrancing,
Or fancied the charms
Of the serpent-like arms,
Or were turned outside-in
By her coppery skin.
And now, as she played *première coryphée*
In our good little Rajah's dark *corps de ballet*,
She threw herself into contortionings frightful,
The native guests plainly thought highly delightful,
And shrieked, "Rama! Rama!" her eyes all aflame,
As if she'd a love who rejoiced in the name,
But in spite of her calling him much, never came;
While the rest, just as if 'twas a heartrending shame,

Shrieked, "Rama!"
Yelled, "Rama!"
Apparently called him a curious person;
Till at length, sick of Rama, the Reverend McPherson,
In a deep undertone gave a vent to some hearty
Remarks, which would hardly have flattered that party.

This Rama he never once dreamed was a god,—
If he had he'd have thought it remarkably odd,
Would have felt it was certainly more than a joke
That a dancer of nautches a god should invoke.
He was blissfully ignorant, quite in the mirk,
Upon matters affecting what wasn't *his* kirk.
"Oh, Ellen!" said he, with an audible groan,
"A nautch is a very dool thing, 'a must own,
And the man who's seen ane and desires to see mair,
I gie him my leave—he's fu' welcome to stare.
If the de'il always fished with *thae* baits, on his dish
I dinna suppose ye'd see mony *white* fish!"

TWO THUMPERS.

In the Dashty-second Crashers was a Major Corker, who
Was remarkable for stories, which were very seldom true.
There was also in the regiment a Captain, Goak by name,
A rival of the Major's, for his talents were the same.

When Corker told a cracker which made everybody stare,
The Captain told a buster, which erected all your hair;
And the Major, waxing furious at being thus outdone,
Came down on his opponent with a truly fearful one!

One evening at the Crasher mess, a goodly party met,
And the statements these romancers made I never shall forget;
They'd respectively resolved for once and ever to decide
Who told the taller tales, who more astonishingly lied.

The dinner was concluded, and the cloth was swept away,
The wine was circulating, and the band had ceased to play;
The billiard-room was full of youngsters handy with the cue,
And in the deep verandah sat a rubber-loving few.

But, rooted to their chairs, remained a dozen men or so,
With their big cheroots and coffee, with their sherry and Bordeaux;
While spicy stories circled, not unmixed with scandal choice,
And loud above the others sounded Major Corker's voice.

They talked of "Nap," and Bismarck, and the Franco-German war,
Of divers local matters, acting, racing, and shikar,
Of many a wild adventure in the jungle, on the sea,
But none could touch the Major—none could yarn so stiff as he.

He'd an anecdote astounding *àpropos* of everything,—
His fancy soared to dizzy heights, when once upon the wing;
And when they got to "tiger," he was game to make a bet
A certain tiger feat of his had ne'er been equalled yet.

"Perhaps you may have heard," he said, "the human eye has power
To make the brute creation quail, the fiercest beast to cower;
Well, I've—you may have noticed it—a most commanding eye,
And I resolved, for science sake, its influence to try.

"Last year, not far from Jaulnah, I was following up a cheetah,
When I came upon a tiger, a notorious man-eater;
He was munching at the thigh-bone of a half-digested nigger—
I raised my gun to pot him, and my hand was on the trigger,

"When I haply recollected that the human eye to test
On a tiger at his lunch would be a thing of interest:
I laid my Purdy down, to my shikaree's great surprise,
And crossed my arms, and calmly stared the tiger in the eyes.

"The monster rose, and licked his chops, and flicked his mangy tail,
And growled a growl which seemed to say, "You're dead, sir, as a nail!"
Then crouched to spring, but didn't spring—and shall I tell you why?—
My stern mesmeric glance had told—I'd caught his wicked eye!

"He blinked, and winked, and strove to shirk my steady stony stare,
But still I gazed, and still he crouched with disconcerted air;
At last he turned, unable to endure my aspect more,
And vanished in the jungle with a half-attempted roar!

"Another day I met this tiger on an open plain,—
He knew me in a moment, and I fixed his eye again;
My stern reproachful look it was again too much for him,
And, like a felon caught i' the act, he shook in every limb!

"A little while he strove to bear the horror of my face,
Then stuck his tail between his legs, and fled at headlong pace!
Not far there stood a cavern wild, fit home for jungle elf,—
I saw him reach that cavern wild, and there he hid himself.

"I followed, and I peered within: beyond the reach of day,
Upon a rock, all foul with human gore, the tiger lay;
Before the cavern's yawning mouth I gravely sat me down,
Resolved to starve the monster out, as Germans do a town.

"At first he simply lay and growled, but as he hungry grew,
He ventured ineffective sorties, just as Frenchmen do,—
Emboldened by despair and want, he'd make a fierce attack,
But, when I dropped my eye upon him, slunk defeated back.

"At length his savage growl sank to an idiotic moan,
His once tremendous carcass was reduced to skin and bone,
His limbs refused their office—he could neither crawl nor rise—
The sure approach of death was shadowed in his hollow eyes!

"For ten long days and weary nights I sat before that den,—
At dawn upon th' eleventh morn I shouted to my men,
They came. With lighted torch we stood inside the cave of death,
And there we saw the grim man-eater draw his final breath!"

He ceased, and then there came a pause, and Corker looked about,
As if to ask if any there were bold enough to doubt.
Said Goak, "I've done that sort of thing, with an elephant instead;
But now I'll spin a yarn of the sea." And this is what he said:

"I was coming out to India, round the Cape, three years ago,
In the clipper ship *Miranda*, owned by Messrs. Green & Co.;
We'd been driven to the southward by a series of gales,
And were fairly in the latitude of icebergs and of whales.

"One morn the sun was rising gloomy from his ocean bed,
When I heard a noise above me, and a cry of 'Boat ahead;'
I seized my big binoculars, and hurried up on deck,
And far ahead upon the wave I saw a tiny speck.

"The sea was running wildly, and each roller, in its turn,
Like a solid wall of water, towered right above the stern,
As if it meant to topple down and thunder on the wheel;
But it only hissed, and, with a lift, surged underneath the keel.

"We drove before a mighty wind, and soon we made out well
The outline of the tiny speck, as it nearer rose and fell;
A minute more, the speck and we were almost side by side,—
'Twas nothing but a hencoop, with a bearded man astride!

"A solar hat was on his head, and in his hand an oar,
A life-belt round his waist this lonely navigator wore;
Of waterproof he also had a tightly-fitting suit,
And in his mouth he seemed to suck a half-consumed cheroot.

"Our captain grasped his speaking-trumpet, hove his vessel to,
And bellowed from the shrouds, 'Hi!—what the blazes!—who are you?
Some shipwrecked seaman, I suppose,—so come aboard my ship.'
The stranger bawled, 'Thanks, very much, but that is not my tip!—

"'No luckless shipwrecked mariner do you behold in me,
But just a man of roving tastes, and bent upon a spree:
I left Bombay a month ago—I'm bound for Liverpool—
I'm right as ninepence, only find the nights a little cool.'

"The captain hitched his trousers up, and quidded to the sea,—
'You air indeed a cusséd rum 'un anyhow!' said he;
'But don't yer want provisions? If yer do, I'm game to give.
Excuse me, pray, for axing—how the blazes do yer live?'

"'Just cast your eye,' the stranger said, 'my little bark within,—
I've got, you'll see, inside the coop, a largish case of tin:
For lack of food and liquor I shall never come to grief,—
It's full, the case, of Mr. Liebig's concentrated beef!

"'I'm truly grateful, captain, but I have no pressing needs,—
The only thing I want is some Vesuvians for my weeds.'
A box was thrown, the stranger lit his half-consumed cigar,
And in our wake we watched him dwindling to a speck afar!

"I subsequently heard that, spite of nights a little cool,
This stranger safely worked his hencoop up to Liverpool;
And when he tells the story of his wild seafaring whim,
He shows the empty match-box which our captain gave to him."

Now, Captain Goak *he* looked around with triumph in his eye:
He thought, "'Twill take the Major all he knows to top *that* lie!"
And all the hearers looked at Corker, thinking much the same:
But Corker coolly said, "My friends, I know that stranger's name;

"And all that Goak has said to-night corroborate I can:
I know it, and I ought to know, because I was the man!
'Twas I who on the hencoop rode to Liverpool by sea,
And here's the empty match-box which the captain gave to me!"

LORD COURTLY.

A REMINISCENCE OF NOT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

LORD COURTLY was a Governor wise,
  As ever ruled Bombay;
But whenever he looked in ladies' eyes
  His wisdom went away.

He couldn't resist their melting power,
  Or sweet lips asking a boon;
And he'd promise things at the tiffin hour,
  He'd forget in the afternoon.

One morning the wife of a Doctor Scratch
  Was tiffining at Parell.
Her eyes were—well, they were hard to match:
  So thought my Lord as well.

He thought, as into their beams he looked,
  He would like in such beams to bask;
And the lady thought that my Lord was hooked,
  And now was the time to ask.

"My Lord," she whispered, "oh, will you give
  My husband the Body Guard?
It's vacant, I hear—and for ever to live
  Up-country is very hard.

"One doctor's as good as another, I'm sure:
  Scratch isn't bad in his way!
And, oh," (with a pout) "I cannot endure
  The thought of leaving Bombay."

Lord Courtly replied, "Sixteen have applied:
  But Scratch will do as well.
It is yours. *Your* merits can't be denied—
  At all events at Parell."

That selfsame eve my Lord drove out
  For air, and airs, at the Band;
And, quitting his equipage, *flâneed* about,
  Shaking the dames by the hand;

When, all of a sudden, his restless eye
  A sidelong glance did meet—
So soft, so melting, and oh, so shy!—
  It nailed him, *toute de suite.*

He sidled up with a "How d'ye do,
  Dear Mrs. Blank, to-night?
I should so enjoy a drive with you!"
  The lady replied, "All right."

They drove about till the daylight sank,
  And the pall of night grew starred;
And he promised her husband, Doctor Blank,
  Should have the Body Guard.

A week elapsed. Sweet Mrs. Scratch!
  O happy, happy wife!
What airy plans all day she'd hatch!—
  No more up-station life.

But if you only guessed, sweet dame,
  Your joy would be somewhat marred:
Put not your faith—Ah, well, it came—
  Blank got the Body Guard!

When Mrs. Scratch soon after met
  My Lord, she said, "Oh, fie!
A pretty affair that last *Gazette*,
  And I'd know the reason why?"

Said he, "Old Blank, my dear, you see,
  To Scratch is senior far;
But I'll give you the Eye Infirmary,—
  That's settled—and there you are."

Said she, "That bargain at once we'll strike.
  What you did, no doubt was right.
I thank you; but oh, this time, I'd like
  To have it in black and white."

MOONSHINE.

THE air is cool, the night is clear,
The moon is bright and round;
All's still,—I cannot even hear
The tom-tom's horrid sound;

Suppressed the irritating hum
That wells from the bazaar,
I'll meditate. Hi! chokra! come,
And bring me a cigar,

The teapoy, and the long arm-chair,
    I'll also have a drink—
I hope the water's iced with care,
    Now go—and let me think.

These solemn nights, those golden beams,
    That wondrous depth of blue,
Allure my soul to lofty dreams;
    Upon my soul they do!

O India, land of glorious eves!
    Of nights all but divine!
Thy moonshine, trembling on the leaves,
    Is not thy *sole moonshine!*

TEMPORA MUTANTUR.

In India, of course, 'tis notorious that worth
Is the sole stepping-stone to a lucrative berth ;
That the parties who sit on the top of the trees,
Where the boughs almost droop with their load of rupees,
Are the parties who've marked themselves out from the rest,
The parties who've publicly proved they're the best.
This point is a fact
Which is never attacked ;
The person who doubts it, no doubt, must be cracked !
But the case wasn't so
In the days that are fled.
Merit wasn't the go ;
Something else was instead.
People not at all clever
Succeeded somehow ;
A scandal that never
Is possible now.
Ah ! we ought to be grateful
We live in a day
When a system so hateful
No longer has sway ;
And should any now question the truth of my stricture,
And think that I'm hard on the past in my rhymes,

I invite them to look at the following picture,
Which wouldn't be true of these healthier times.

There lived once a Major named Cecity Mole,
A most unmistakeably commonplace soul,
Intended by nature to play a dull *rôle.*
Notwithstanding all this, though, he rose to the top,
Steadily, surely, with never a stop—
Often, indeed, with a kind of a hop—
Skipping along on the tide of promotion,
Just as a sea-gull skims over the ocean.

First he was posted an A.-Q.-M.-G.,
Having wriggled through somehow in Hindostanee:
A feat which astonished his intimates sore,
And even—he said so—astonished him more.
And how it, as such,
More than cramming high Dutch,
Rendered him specially fit for the Staff,
Was a matter I never could comprehend half.

Here he bore himself well to the general wonder;
That is, he committed no scandalous blunder.
He might have been brighter,
But, come, we'll be fair;
He'd a capital writer
Who kept him all square.
There was no little war with its gatherings of forces,
No strain consequently upon his resources.
He moved a few *corps*
For the yearly relief,
And arranged "*le transport*"
Without coming to grief.

No cholera happened just then to be rife,
So he wasn't removed, wigged, or tried for his life.
The bandies he hired
Cost the usual double,
So he wasn't required
To explain and give trouble;
In fact, his incumbency satisfied most
That there might have been even worse men for the post.

Having mastered the movements of biles and of men,
He was secondly dubbed a Judge-Advocate-Gen.;
Though, if asked the connection
'Twixt this and that berth,
I am forced, on reflection,
To say "What on earth?"
The only solution which comes to the mind
Is that, 'twixt the two spheres, there's a wonderful kind
Of link cabalistic,
Supernatural, mystic,
Which no common mortal can see, being blind.

Our hero, now thrust into labyrinth legal,
Soon showed that he had *not* the eye of the eagle:
Played curious capers
With justice and law;
Squashed court-martial papers
That hadn't a flaw;
Writing notes on the finding,
Or sentence, or both,
Very hazy, reminding
The Court of its oath;
For he couldn't dissemble
The fact that the Court,

Which must now re-assemble,
Had quite set at nought
The drift of the evidence, customs of war,
And the principles most fundamental of law.

Then the members would meet,
And in wonderment learn,
From the ponderous sheet,
How they'd botched the concern.
But—from mere opposition
Of course—must adhere
To their former decision,
The facts being clear.
Whereupon the Judge-Advocate went to the chief,
Who declared, when he'd read it all, leaf upon leaf,
He was dreadfully pained,
But in duty constrained
To agree with the Court the proceedings were good,
And the Court had decided as he himself should.

After this, our Staff officer shortly was made
Brigadier of a favourite Indian brigade;
And the tricks that he played
With his troops on parade,
Putting all his Judge-Advocate larks in the shade,—
Weren't they writ in the hearts of the gunners who fired
At the rear of their friends, as they slowly retired?
Weren't they graved in the minds of the troopers, who tried
By a resolute charge to destroy their own side?
Weren't they grief to the Infantry Colonels, who swore
That the foe couldn't both be behind and before?
Weren't they scored on the brains of that Brigadier's Staff?
Ay, and didn't they serve as a garrison chaff?

Having thus set his mark as a Brigadier gallant
(For I *must* say he gave splendid dinners and wine),
And the big-wigs apparently scenting some talent
Which didn't come out in the tactical line,
He was suddenly, and to the general joy
Of the army, appointed to civil employ.
I wouldn't be guilty of illiberality,
But cannot help saying
'Twas rather dismaying
To see him the head of a municipality!

See; here was a man
Who in clover began,
And successively ran
Through a pretty good span
Of some pretty good things
Just as if he had wings;
And yet he was only an average soul,
A most unmistakeably commonplace soul—
A square man, in fact, in a circular hole.
Now, what was the secret? Say, how was this done?
Had he merit? I *think* we might say he had none;
At least not enough
Of the genuine stuff
To push him along over other men's heads,
And drop him a-top of such feathery beds.

The reason now hear,
And the thing will be clear.
Mr. Cecity Mole,
Though an average soul,
A most unmistakeably commonplace soul,

Married early in life
Quite a gem of a wife,
Who, when he got in, pulled him out of, a hole:
A lady so clever,
Folks wondered how ever
She'd yielded to such a ridiculous whim
As to swear any sort of obedience to him.
She was somewhat a belle,
Her connections were swell,
And *she'd interest all in the line that would tell!*

Interest, interest—that was the key,
Opening locks, sir, on both sides the sea;
Merit? Bah!—interest, influence, birth,
He who had these, you might wager had worth.

There is the picture; and, reader, you'll own
That the world has, since then, much more virtuous grown.
The days of "queer jobs" are now happily flown,
And success is the guerdon of merit alone.
We live in the era of "tests" and "selection;"
In fact, we're as near as can be to perfection!

JINKS'S LEAVE.

Of all the Tartars in Hazereepore,
The sourest that I could name
Was a colonel, commanding a Cavalry corps—
Colonel de Fierie Phlaime.

His nose was purple, his cheeks were red,
And so was his curly hair.
He was fat and fierce, and his officers said
It was awful to hear him swear!

Loudly he swore on parade; and oh
The language he used at the Mess,
When an impudent subaltern ventured a "no"
To Colonel de Fierie's "yes"!

The Colonel's spouse, she was meagre and meek;
She once had a spirit, they say;
But a course of bullying, week by week,
Had spirited it away.

Colonel de Phlaime had a daughter fair,
Sprightly as he was grim,
And she was the only soul who dare
Think of tackle-ing him.

Her name was Rose. She was rosy and plump,
Just eighteen summers old.
The Cornets dubbed her a regular trump,
And worth her weight in gold.

Court-martial'd nearly was little Jack Spree
For playing a practical joke;
And everyone thought it was all UP
Till the damsel up and spoke:—

"Of course you are bound to make a fuss,
O righteously-angered dad!
But, you know, it is known to all of us,
You practical joked as bad

"When *you* were a Cornet. I've heard you brag
'The devil and all' you played;
You docked the tail of the Colonel's nag,
His favourite on parade."

Tom Doughty, too, was in dire distress;
His case looked deadly blue;
The pate of a billiard-marker at Mess
He broke with a billiard cue!

Said the Colonel,—"I'm d—d if I let these chaps
Blacks with impunity flog.
They're a d—d too liberal with their raps,
And Doughty's a d—d young dog!

"I'll break him, d—d if I don't, by Jove!"
"In*deed?*" Rose mildly said;
"Then it can't have been you I saw yesterday, love,
Punching our mahlee's head?"

So little Jack Spree and Doughty, both,
Got off with a reprimand.
"Next time," said De Phlaime, with a terrible oath,
"You'll feel the weight of my hand!"

Cornets he held in particular dread--
All subalterns were his foes;
For Rose de Phlaime was fit to wed,
And subalterns *will* propose.

Whenever a Cornet chanced to call,
And Rose approved of the lad,
'Twas, "A d—d young puppy; just like 'em all—
Some d—d young monied cad!"

At Infantry Captains he turned up his nose,
At his own gay Captains glared,
Some were quite ready to ask for Rose,
But never a one of them dared.

"D—d unprincipled roysterers, they—
Paupers every one!
Why do they soldier in India, pray?
Damme, for fear of the dun!"

One morning, coming from early drill,—
Murmuring oaths, of course,—
Colonel de Phlaime took terribly ill
And nearly fell from his horse.

For, lo! in the garden about his house,
Perched on a rustic seat,
Rose de Phlaime was inhaling the vows
Of a Cornet at her feet!

"D—d young rascal!" he inwardly swore,
"Wanton it while you can.
Ask me for leave from drill once more—
Ask me for leave, my man!

"Think you your Colonel's a drivelling fool?—
Jinks?—Ah, how d'ye do?
(*Sotto voce*)—The riding-school
And Adjutant's drill for you!"

Cornet Jinks was a handsome spark;
Rose was aware of the fact;
And they fancied they kept uncommonly dark
A certain mutual pact.

But smashed for the present was Jinks's dream,
So Colonel de Phlaime opined;
And little did that stern parient deem
What mischief was in the wind.

At riding-school and Adjutant's drill
He kept that Cornet gay;
Enough most subalterns for to kill,
Or turn their hair to grey.

But Jinks he never a murmur made,—
His sorrows had their balm,
For a friendly ayah his notes conveyed,
And Rose sent back "Salaam."

"Oh, Colonel, give me leave for a week!"
One morning he dared to say,
The Colonel replied, "Confound your cheek!
D—d if you get a day!

"You're loutish and lubberly on parade;
Ride like a tailor, too.
Damme, my orders shall be obeyed,—
Nothing but drill for you!"

Another fortnight had slipped away—
Jinks had again applied;
Again the Colonel had said him nay,
And d—d poor Jinks beside.

De Phlaime, he fancied that things were well:
To sell Jinks seemed inclined.
But Jinks, he contemplated a sell
Of a vastly different kind.

"I want to go home to England, sir,
On urgent private affairs;
I've heard of the death of my grandmother,
And I am one of her heirs."

Colonel de Phlaime he cocked his eye,
And he scratched his curly head.
"D—d if I don't think that's a lie,—
A damnable lie!" he said.

"However, I'll think, and I'll let you know."
Then home to his breakfast went.
Said Rose, "Oh, let the noodle go,
If that is the noodle's bent.

"He isn't much good to the corps, I fear,
And certainly won't be missed."
De Phlaime declared her his daughter dear,
And Rose was audibly kissed.

"Well, well!" he thought, "he's a dangerous lot
And better out of the way."
So the leave was officially asked, and got,
Early the following day.

"Good bye, dear Colonel,—my horse-dawk's laid,
And I must travel in haste,
For my grandmother's sole executor said
I had got no time to waste."

The Cornet left in the dead of the night,
For merry England bound,
And the morrow broke on a scene of affright,
For—Rose was not to be found!

In the Cornet's track she had hied away,
And left her dad in the lurch;
And he was relieved when she wrote to say
She had met her Jinks in church!

MY MOONSHEE.

MY Móonshee was a stately man, his name Mahómed Deen ;
He had a very wary eye, and was to business keen.
Beneath his grave exterior a fund of humour'd lurk,
And forty-five rúpees a month I paid him for his work.

He came to me to cram me every day for my H. S.,
One hour each morn and afternoon, occasionally less.
At first I liked his coming, for I liked the yarns he spun,
Of course in English ; very little native "bât" was done.

We did a little "Forbes," and read "Selections" now and then,
Sometimes I scratched a little with the sticks he brought for pen;

He always brought some new ones, for they always got mislaid,
And annas four for each of them Mahómed Deen was paid.

One day he said, "O Sa'ib, no Oordoo Dictionary got;
Sa'ib buy one at bookseller's, and they charging Sa'ib a lot;
I know where get one plenty cheap, Sa'ib follow my advice,
Sa'ib only give me forty rúpee,—nothing that for price."

So Moonshee got the forty, and I got an ancient book
That oft had cost a forty did I judge it by its look;
And then I made an effort to transcribe to neat Oordoo
The scraps of Indian history that from his script he drew.

I also tried to master what he called a Sepoy's chit,
Some hieroglyphs on paper,—oh, and such a dirty bit!
That awful roll of chits I loathed, I did upon my soul,—
It haunts me even now, the thought of that infernal roll!

The first from Bux to Chinniah to say his wife was dead;
The next from Klux to Ramiah about the price of bread;
The third from Khan to Pooneah to say he'd left Bombay;
The fourth from Hassan, stating that the Colonel'd cut his pay.

The fifth,—oh, no, I can't! In fact, I never looked at more.
I'm sure I never got beyond that entertaining four.
I said, "It's nonsense, Moonshee, bringing things so vilely writ."
And then he'd spin a yarn or two, and I would smoking sit.

Much progress I am fain to say I did not seem to make.
I couldn't say three words together minus a mistake.
"Sa'ib wanting Sepoy 'nuckul,' Sa'ib one Sepoy man I bring.
Sa'ib giving five rúpee each time, then talking easy thing."

So Sepoys came, and many five rúpees my Moonshee took,
Until I thought I'd learn it rather cheaper from a book.
Besides, they one and all on their domestic matters dwelt,
Their "nuckuls" were alike, and oh, they generally smelt!

At length I grew so weary of the chits, and books, and talk,
That when my lesson hour arrived I sneaked out for a walk;
Or when the Moonshee, waiting on the steps, for Sa'ib inquired,
I made my servant say, "Sa'ib sleeping, Sa'ib be plenty tired."

Thus five months passed. Oh, dear! those most exhausting months of cram!
And "very soon," my Moonshee said, "Sa'ib going for Exam."
He also said, "Sa'ib, pray excuse, but what will master do,—
What master giving Moonshee man, if master getting through?

"Two hundred fifty rúpee, sircar backsheesh, Sa'ib will get;
Sa'ibs always giving Moonshee half—got never less, sar, yet.
I always coming reg'lar; teaching good." I stood aghast;
But, yes, I promised half the sircar backsheesh if I passed.

The time approached. The day before my Moonshee whispered low—
"Sa'ib likely fail translation: brigade clerk poor Moonshee know;
He keeping printed papers, but he open box for me:
Sa'ib giving fifty rúpee, Sa'ib perhaps he this agree."

He got the fifty rúpees, and I do confess, he took
The paper, and we put it into Oordoo like a book;
And then he said, "At the exam. Sa'ib talk with Sepoy man,
One Mussulman, one Hindoo, find those Sepoys Moonshee can!

"Sa'ib give me thirty rúpee, and what Sepoys warned I learn;
They always taking both from native regiment in its turn;
This time, I think, the sixty-fifth, the office clerk he tell,
And then I fetch them; Sa'ib give clerk fifteen rúpee as well."

I paid. He brought the Sepoys in a gharry very late;
They told me, each, the "nuckuls" that to-morrow they'd relate,
And then they made salaam, and grinned; and then I heard them start
To let some other Sa'ibs some other "nuckuls" get by heart.

The morning dawned. We went, a dozen candidates or so,
And in the drear court martial room they sat us in a row;
A yard between each candidate, to bar one's getting aid,
And then before us, each, the bagged translation papers laid.

I hardly need to state I made a lovely job of these,—
I almost wished I'd gone in for the highest of degrees.
You might perhaps have said that the caligraphy was weak,
But, Lord! the Hindostanee such as Salar Jung might speak!

Then followed the confounded chits. I made a mess of two:
I said to the Examiner, "These chits I cannot do.
They're scrawls!" Said he, "Oh, never mind; here, try this one instead."
From Bux (I saw) to Chinniah to say his wife was dead!

I read it, galloped through it: I could say it off by heart!
"Thank you," said the Examiner; "your reading's very smart."
How that old chit got *there* I am not able to reveal:
I never asked, but, like the cockatoo, I thought a deal.

Then came "Selections." These somehow I flopped and floundered through:
They fortunately set a passage that I partly knew.

Then last of all the Sepoy's bât. Thought I, "*That's* pretty square!"
I hardly could refrain from laughing out, I do declare.

First, enter Hindoo Sepoy. Sure enough, the one I'd seen:
I called a silent blessing down on old Mahómed Deen;
Then listened for the "nuckul" that I'd heard but yesternight.
The man began—I surely could not hear the man aright!

I stared at him, and frowned at him. The tale I'd never heard,
Of what the fellow said I could not comprehend a word.
The frightful truth then burst in all its horrors. Oh, too late!
The stupid idiot took me for another candidate!

For someone else the story overnight he had prepared,
But something had his recognizing faculties impaired.
'Twas all UP 'twas clear to me. I would that I could sink!
What does that dear Examiner of all this business think?

The tale went on. I could not render e'en a single phrase:
I never shall forget my feelings to my dying days.
At last I pleaded faintness, sickness, nervousness, what not?
And bolted, cursing Moonshee, Sepoys, all the blessèd lot!

I did not pass. That fact, perhaps, I hardly need state.
I was an ass to hope I would, and well deserved my fate.
But 'mid my woes I had, aha! the satisfaction mean
Of saying, "No backsheesh for you, my friend Mahómed Deen!"

PERFIDE ALBION.

(A hitherto unwritten chapter of Oriental history.)

Did you e'er meet a Gaul, patriotic in *ton*,
Who didn't call England "*perfide Albion*"?
If you haven't as yet, you are certain to hear him
Whenever you mention the taking of Perim.
This Perim's an island
Devoid of a tree,

A baked bit of dry land
Below the Red Sea.
No Government owned it
A few years ago,
Till Great Britain boned it,
As soon I shall show.
It's dreadfully rocky, and frightfully hot;
And out of it not e'en a weed's to be got;
In fact, upon islands at large it's a blot;
And I'd rather be shot
Than be told that my lot
Was to dwell on that desolate, desolate spot.

But it stands in a strait at the Red Sea's mouth,
Commanding the passage or north or south;
And should matters in Eastern parts ever be critical,
Perim might prove of some value political.
At all events, this was the statesmanlike view
That was taken by each diplomatic Mossoo.
"Ne possédent ils pas Aden, ces Anglais, mon Dieu!
Oui; nous aurons Perim. Pourquoi non? Sacré bleu!"

This was what the *bureaux* designate *une idée,*
And the next thing to do was to make it *un fait.*
That's the usual course in affairs Continental,
So why not adopt it in things Oriental?

"*Ces Anglais*" might swear,
Crying out 'twas unfair,
And a robbery bare;
And *The Times* in a leader might offer a prayer
For a country so greedy and mad as to dare

To maraud in the East, for the world was aware
That the East was Old England's peculiar care;
And *The Times*, as *The Times*, would have Frenchmen
beware,
For that Perim might prove, after all, but a snare,
Entailing an outlay they couldn't well spare;
That France had already far more than her share—
Bourbon, Pondicherry, and Chandernagore—
And 'twas monstrous to think she could want any more;
That other encumbrance might drain, couldn't better her,
And the sooner she dropped it—etcætera, etcætera.

Thus argued Mossoo
That Old England would do;
But he added a pregnant corollary too:
"Let her talk if she likes,
She looks fierce, never strikes,
For John Bull is the servant of Mr. Bill Sikes.
She may swagger, and bluster, and warn us, but we
Will inform her the thing is a *fait accompli*;
And you'll probably see
That, although very hurt,
She will let matters be,
And will swallow the dirt."

The project thus having been carefully hatched,
"*Un ordre*" was to Bourbon or somewhere dispatched,
Telling Monsieur le Chef to send off a fast frigate
To Perim, and, ere that the British could twig it,
To hoist the French *drapeau* upon it, and prig it.
So a frigate was sent
With this wicked intent.

And with gaudy new *drapeaux* was heavily laden;
And the ship on her way
Just put in for a day
At the British adjacent possession of Aden.

Now, of course, what the *rôle*
She should play, or the goal
She'd in view, not a soul
On this freebooting ship
Gave the slenderest tip;
She might have been trying to find the South Pole.

The sailors were fêted,
And some got elated,
And Frenchmen and Englishmen a-malgamated;
But never a word
Of their mission was heard;
And this silence you'll think neither strange nor absurd,
When I tell you they none of them knew. It was wrapped in
The innermost cell in the breast of the Captain.
The name of this Captain was François de Bonheur,
Of, I hardly need say so, the *légion d'honneur;*
And our Gov'nor's name was Sir John Thomas, he
Being, *ça va sans dire*, a distinguished C.B.
The latter invited the Captain to dine,
And placed on his board some uncommon good wine.

Now, whether 'twas due to the port or the sherry,
Or high-seasoned fare,
Or British "portare,"
Or the tropical air,
I cannot declare;
But somehow or other they grew pretty merry.

Sir John Thomas, rising, rejoiced beyond measure,
In fact it was hard to express all his pleasure,
To see at his table,
So gallant and able,
So brave and devoted,
So noble and noted,
A sailor of France as the guest on his right.
And he felt, with a kind of prophetic foresight,
That the object,—he hoped they'd excuse the remark,—
The object they kept so remarkably dark—
Be it fishing for turtles, or finding new seas,
Or searching the East for proscribed refugees,
Or trying a gun on some beggarly village,
Or practising hands at a wee bit of pillage,—
Would, unless some unfortunate accident dished it,
Be crowned with the thorough success that he wished it.

Then the gallant Mossoo,
With his hand on his star,
Said—"I tank you, parbleu!
Varee moash, de ma part;
C'est' défendu de dire
Ce que nous allons faire,
J'ai juré par l'Empire
Ma patrie, et ma mère,
"Mais" . . . perhaps 'twas the port had relaxed his discretion;
Perhaps he conceived
We'd be better deceived
By a make-show of candour, a touch of confession;
Perhaps he felt sure 'twas too late in the day
To matter if now he disclosed *le secret;*
However it came about, this much is certain,
He raised for a moment a bit of the curtain.

For he went on to say,
In a nonchalant way,
That although 'twasn't proper to flash his *objet*,
He was bound, in his quest of it, up the Red Sea,
To some place which was only conjectured to be;
That he hadn't in view any war or alliance,
That his mission was purely connected with science;
And that simply to fill up a page in his log,
And look at a shore which to him was incog.,
He intended to order his master to steer him,
En passant, quite close to the island of Perim.

Then he grew sentimental, and red in the face,
And smothered an Aide-de-Camp in an embrace,
And swore he thought Aden a glorious place,
And kissed "Sir Jhon Thomars" (who made a grimace),
And called that brave soldier a vare joli tar,
And wound it all up with a "heep heep hourrah!"

At the mention of Perim, Sir John nearly rose
From his chair, but recovered by blowing his nose.
He blew it a good twenty minutes at least,
And appeared to have done himself good when he ceased.
For there seemed something like to a wink in his eye,
As he whispered some words to an Aide sitting by;
Which Aide, when he heard, looked half funny, half grave,
As a man meditating a pun or a shave;
Stole a glance at the Captain, then one at Sir John,
Then seemed most intently the ceiling to con;
Then stared in his wine-glass right down to the bottom,
As though there were flies in his wine, he'd got 'em;
Then fidgeted, jerkily looking behind,
As if to skedaddle occurred to his mind;

Then, finally, vanished in haste from his chair,
As if he'd the tooth-ache, or needed fresh air.
When he got well outside,
Where the darkness could hide,
He walked down the hill out of sound of the revel.
There his cap up he shied,
And he laughed till he cried.
Then he took to his legs, and he ran like the D . . . l—
Ran till he stood, void of breath, on the poop
Of a nice little tight little British war-sloop;
And the message he gave, amid roars, to the skipper,
Was, just as that worthy expressed it, a clipper.
The night was still young when the snug little ship
Left Aden, as on some mysterious trip;
And the Aide saw the Rock sinking down to a speck,
As he danced an expressive *pas seul* on the deck.

The feed came, of course, like all feeds, to a close.
Potations concluded, the Frenchmen all rose.
There were farewells ecstatic, embracings convulsive,
And kisses—eugh!—slobberings, that is the word:
Sir John thought Le Capitaine highly repulsive,
Le Capitaine thought Sir John highly absurd;
But they hugged and they shrugged,
And they parted in sorrow,
And spoke very huskily both of the morrow,
As if it would dawn on twin hearts rudely cleft,
And it wasn't all humbug and over the left.

Well, the morrow did dawn, and the jaunty French ship
At the first streak of light gave her moorings the slip.
De Bonheur arose too betimes from his bed,
With a dolorous sense of possessing a head.

But he said to himself as he fixed his two eyes on
The island of Perim, just on the horizon—
"Sir John Thomars, when he shall hear of my prize,
Will possess a head too, and will flatter my eyes."
Then his sabre he buckled,
And swaggered and chuckled,
And got the new *drapeaux* all out of the hold,
And ordered the gunners
To fire off some stunners,
That the glory of France might be properly told.

Soon the desolate shore
Topped the waves more and more,
Till the land, red and bare
In the pitiless glare,
Became clear to the view
Of the gallant Mossoo.
He balanced himself with his glass and looked out;
And, after a pause, put it down as in doubt.
Looked again: took his *mouchoir* and polished the lens;
Looked again: pitched it down and took one of his men's;
Looked again: blew his nose, rubbed his eyes, and once more
Took a long steady look—same result as before;
Laid it down, put his hands in his pockets, and swore.
He *sacré-bleu*-ed awful a minute or so,
And tapped at his brow, as he paced to and fro,
As if he half dreaded his brains had got loose,
Or some fiend with his vision was playing the deuce.
At length somewhat calmed, he returned to the charge,
This time with a telescope wonderfully large.
He looked: let it fall; stared to landward a bit
With protruding blank eyes, and—fell down in a fit.

And now, gentle reader, it's time that you knew
What horrors had burst on Le Capitaine's view.
On a ridge on the island, which highest appeared,
A pretty tall flagstaff was solidly reared.
So tall 'twould have certainly shamed all the trees
Had there been any there; and afloat on the breeze
Streamed the swelling expanse of the glorious old flag,
Which English affection and slang calls "the Rag;"
While beneath, hat in hand, were a group of Jack tars,
Engaged evidently in shouting hurrahs;
And astride on a rock, 'neath an umbrella's shade,
Like the sprite of the scene, our acquaintance the Aide.
Thus Perim was won,
And thus Frenchmen were done,
And if a bit shabby,
'Twas very good fun.

THE CONTENTED SUB.

WHEN the island of Perim became British soil,
  Many pounds on a lighthouse were spent;
And to show British power, and replenish the oil,
  A sub., and some Sepoys were sent.

But Perim is lonely, and barren, and hot,
  Not a vestige of life in the place;
And many who've seen it consider the spot
  A blotch upon Nature's face.

So the duty, though simple enough of its kind,
  Wasn't fancied as much as might be.
Sub. the first—sub. the second—went out of his mind,
  Sub. the third drank himself to D. T.

Sub. the fourth, finding Christmas unbearably slow,
  Very nigh brought his prospects to grief,
By signalling "stop" to the mail P. and O.,
  And asking for "pudding and beef."

'Twas resolved then to send off a pair at a time;
  But, once tried, 'twas abandoned as cruel;
For monotony drove them to quarrel and crime,
  And they slaughtered themselves in a duel.

The Gov'nor of Aden, he raved and he stormed,
  His mind with perplexity laden.
"A duty's a duty, and must be performed,
  But how?" cried the Gov'nor of Aden.

"I don't like dispatching young subs. to their graves;
  Still, a duty's a duty, they'll own:
So send to . . . that little place over the waves
  'Lieutenant MacOdic' Alloan."

Lieutenant MacOdic' Alloan very soon
  Took command of the feeders of oil;
And the Gov'nor wondered, as moon after moon
  Found MacOdic' Alloan at his toil.

And he wondered the more when a letter from Mac
  Informed that, so far from disliking
The post, he'd at present no wish to come back,
  And considered the scenery striking.

"By Gad!" cried the Governor, chuckling, "at last
  We have got the right man, I should say;
And what's more, as he likes it, we'll keep him there fast
  As long as the beggar will stay."

At the end of six months or so Mac again wrote,
  "That he liked his retreat even more.
He could never again take to collar or coat,
  And trousers would prove a sad bore.

"He'd no letters to answer, no duns to cajole,
  No visits, no ponderous feeds,
No trouble but now and then calling the roll,
  And the rest of the day to his weeds—

"Lounging about in a jolly long laze,
  Very like lotus-eating, in fact."
Said the Gov'nor—"As long as it suits him, he stays,
  But I'm hanged if I don't think he's cracked."

Another six months, and a letter that said
  That Lieutenant MacOdic' Alloan
Was quite ready to stop a successor instead,
  So attached to the island he'd grown.

"Oh, pray let him stop," roared the Gov'nor,—"the muff!
  A successor'd be awkward to find.
Some day, I suppose, he'll be crying 'Enough!'
  I wish they were all of his mind."

So MacOdic' Alloan stopped a couple of years,
  "Which," he wrote, "had too rapidly fled."
And now very strong grew the Governor's fears
  That the lad must be wrong in his head.

And they grew and they grew till he swore by the Lord
  That the youth must be mad as a hatter;
And he sent off to Perim a medical board
  To see him and settle the matter.

To Perim the cargo of doctors soon ran,
  But they found not a trace of the sub.
He'd been living, this very contented young man,
  At home, for two years, at his club!

THE TANK TRAGEDY.

COLONEL WHITE was over forty;
  Jane, his bride, was seventeen;
She was also very naughty,
  For she loved a Captain Green

Colonel White was hale and hearty,—
  Men are so at forty-nine;
But he was a solemn party,
  And he drank a deal of wine:

Every evening, at dinner,
  Colonel White would tipple deep,
And that pretty little sinner
  Let her Johnny fall asleep;

Then beyond the dark verandah,
  In a shady nook unseen,
She would folly and philander
  With the wicked Captain Green.

She would tell her darling Gussy
  How that "sleepy grunting brute"
Called her a disgraceful hussy
  When she tried a mild cheroot!

How, when once the corps dramatic
  Of the Station sought her aid—
Asked her in the *Dream Ecstatic*
  To enact the Frenzied Maid—

He, the monster, in a passion,
  Swore he wouldn't let her play—
Said play-going was a fashion
  Damnable in every way:

He, for one, had no intention
  Men on her their eyes should feast
In a way he wouldn't mention—
  ("Gussy, wasn't he a beast?")

How he'd not permit her dancing
  Anything but dances square—
Called the rest all "devil's prancing"—
  ("Gussy, isn't he a bear?")

How he chid her when she joked him,
  Slapped her when she didn't heed,
And whenever she provoked him,
  Pulled her hair ("he did indeed!")—

Beat her with the backs of brushes,
  Made her sleep upon the floor—
On the cruel China rushes—
  ("Gussy, shall I tell you *more?*")

How he held the taunt above her—
  "If you wish it, cut and run!"—
How there was no one to love her—
  ("Gussy, is there *any* one?")

Gussy's answer may be guessed at—
  But, for that delicious hint
She so skilfully finessed at,
  Gussy had a heart of flint.

Gussy he had no objection
  To destroy another's wife,
But a permanent connection—
  "Quite absurd, upon my life!"

Mistress White she had an ayah—
  "Do whatever Missis please;
Missis send her letters by her,
  Missis only give rupees.

"Master Green, he handsome master—
  Plenty fun-fun, plenty spend—
Never know him when he passed her—
  Always be that master's friend!"

Once that ayah stole a jewel,
  And her mistress—" Ayah say
Missis very, very cruel!"—
  Fined her half her monthly pay.

That same day, as black as thunder
  Was the solemn Colonel's brow;
And his little wife did wonder
  What on earth could be the row.

"Was he cross, the dear old monny?
  Was he feeling rather queer?
You'll be better, darling Johnny,
  When you've had your dinner, dear."

Then she laid her hand so chubby
  On his neck, caressing much;
And she felt her dear old hubby
  Shiver underneath the touch.

"Darling Johnny, this is fever;
  You had better go to bed."
And that elegant deceiver
  Kissed her Johnny's grizzly head.

Johnny bore the sweet caresses—
  Simply said, "I'm rather weak,"—
While, unseen amid her tresses,
  Stole a tear adown his cheek.

Dinner came. The Colonel liquored
  From the beaker with the lid;
But somehow his eyeballs flickered
  Sooner than they mostly did.

Murmured she—"He's weakly, surely—
  Something's put him wrong to-day!"
Then the eyelids closed securely,
  And the Colonel snored away;

One of them just opened slightly
  As the lady softly rose:
Pish!—'twas merely an unsightly
  Bluebottle upon his nose.

Swiftly through the dark verandah
  Flew she to the nook unseen,
There to folly and philander
  With the wicked Captain Green.

"Dearest Gussy, darling, duckey,
  I am weary of the strife!
If you love me, and are plucky,
  Take me from this wretched life!"

"Jane, you turn me tipsy-topsy!—
  What's this nonsense in your head?
Think, my precious popsy-wopsy,
  Only think what would be said!"

"Do you wish, then, to forsake me?"
  "Poppet, can you have a doubt?"
"Gussy, then, oh, why not take me?"—
  "'Cos my wife is coming out!"

"Married?—Oh, you base deceiver!
  Monster!—married all the time!
Wife?—Oh, heavens! how 'twould grieve her
  If she only knew your crime!

"Can you have a heart, you coward,
  Thus to blast her happiness?"
Captain Green's dark eyebrows lowered—
  "This," said he, "'s a tidy mess!

"But, my dearest, recollect, pray,
  You have done the same as I;
Does your Johnny quite expect, pray,
  You are *here?* My love, good-bye!"

"Hold!" behind them cried the Colonel—
  Captain Green he started back –
"You're a villain most infernal!"
  And the rest was, whack! whack! whack!

* * * * *

In the morn, what did they see, oh!
  Near a soft and sloping bank,

Cursèd thrice those base sectarians
  Of the new Brahmo Somaj !—
Setting man and man at variance,
  Saying "God's maidan is large :

"Men may worship God together,
  Though they've not the self-same creed—
Differ, yet agree ;"—the tether
  They would give is wide indeed !

"Men are brothers—let's acknowledge
  Brotherhood with other men :"—
This is what they learn at college—
  This is what says Chundrer Sen !

* * * * *

Baboo Humbul Bumbul Bender
  Also was a Brahmin warm ;
But he was a staunch defender
  Of the progress of reform.

He and Chundrer, when the trouble
  Of the busy day was o'er,
Smoked their evening hubble-bubble
  Sitting at the open door—

Chatting, free from heat and worry,
  Mostly of the current price
Tradesmen asked for flour and curry,
  And the second sort of rice ;

Sometimes, too, of graver matters—
  Caste, religion, and the rest,—

And they grew as mad as hatters
  At the views they heard expressed.

Once they threatened one another's
  Ruin in a tragic way:
Bender saying, "Men are brothers!"
  Made it up the following day.

"Chundrer," said one night the latter,
  "I a widow mean to wed."
"Something, then, must be the matter
  With your senses," Chundrer said.

"Caste, you know,'s a stern forbidder
  Of such ill-assorted ties:
He who goes and weds a widder,
  God and man alike defies.

"You'll be excommunicated,
  And the doom will serve you right!"
Bender said, "The case you've stated
  True to your degree of light;

"But there is a class of thinkers
  Growing up among our race,
Who would tear aside the blinkers
  Caste has fastened to our face;

"Men who hold the law of reason
  Is a holier law than caste—
Think that it has had its season,
  And must yield its grip at last.

"Times are changed, and civilization
  Now begins to work its way;—
We've discovered that stagnation
  Isn't quite the thing to pay.

"Don't you know, obstructive fellow,
  What's the cry in India now?
To remind you, I will tell you—
  'Tis '*Humayscha agé jao!*'"

"These are notions simply childish!"
  Answered Chundrer, waxing wroth;
And his eye looked rather wildish
  As he gathered up his cloth:

"You a Brahmin?—You're a traitor!—
  Wed your widow if you choose—
Take her, learn to loathe and hate her!
  Cursèd be your very shoes!"

Saying this, he kicked the slippers
  Where the nasty gutter flows,
While the other's hands, like nippers,
  Fastened on to Chundrer's nose!

Screeching, tearing one another's
  Linen much, they fought away—
Going it like men and brothers,
  Till—a bobby stopped the fray,—

Drove them to the chowkee station,
  Charged with kicking up a row,
And to every protestation
  Simply answered, "*Agé jao!*"

THE LETTER FROM HOME.

ANOTHER to add to the cherished pile!
One echo more from the far-off isle!
May the hand that penned thee be spared to twine
Lovingly once again in mine.

The mother's writing!—my hide is tough,
And the road of life has been somewhat rough,
The fount of my tears, one would think, were dry,
But it always brings a mist to my eye.

For a letter from her is a murmur of love,
A gentle message, as from above,
A sweet pure breath, 'mid the world's foul strife,
Laden with good and hallowing life.

How well I remember the first she sent,
Written, I fancy, the night I went;
The anguish—the courage—the tender care—
The fond ambition—the blessing—the prayer!

It is many a year since that page was stirred,
But I've got it by heart, each line, each word;
And it often rouses regrets that are vain,
And makes me wish I'd my time again.

And this the latest! I see her sitting,
The lamp green-shaded, the fire-flame flitting;
The Dad in his deep old-fashioned chair,
Asleep, with his spectacles up in his hair;

The half-read journal across his knees;
Old "Crib" on the hearth-rug taking his ease;
The tea-things under the urn, hard by,
Singing a sort of lullaby.

With her hand to her brow, and a stool at her feet,
She sits at her desk, all trim and neat.
Slowly, sedately, she fills the page,
And she writes a wonderful hand for her age.

And when she has given her soul to the ink,
She leans herself back, and seems to think.
Her lips just move, and her eyes are aglow,
And a tear drops on to the sheet below.

Then she chides herself for becoming so sad,
And calls in a cheery tone to the Dad,
Saying his love is as usual sent?
And he nods his head, to express content.

She is closing the letter—the cover is there,
When a step is heard outside on the stair,
And with cheeks all rosy, and shining skin,
Old Parkes, the butler, comes softly in.

He knows at a glance, while he makes the tea,
That the mother's been writing to none but me;
And he whispers, passing behind her back,
"Respects, if you please, m'm, to Mister Jack."

Yes—there are the words in their own P.S.,
Simple enough, but welcome no less;
Familiar, perhaps, for a serving-man,
But we'd better take love in what guise we can.

It tells, this letter, the love oft-told,
But the writing is hardly so firm as of old.
It breaks upon me the more I look:
The hand, I'm afraid, not the table, shook.

It is what, I suppose, one is bound to expect,
But it gives a shock when we first detect;
And it wrings a man, when he's tied to a land
Where he's thousands of miles away from the hand.

The hand! whose lingering touch is still
Felt in mine with a fancied thrill:
The hand that caressed from the hour of my birth!
There are only two others as dear on earth.

CARDOZO, THE HALF-CASTE.

EMANUEL CARDOZO kept a beer store in Madras;
He sold it casked and bottled, and he sold it by the glass;
He also sold tinned sausages, and hams, and marmalade;
Moreover turned an honest penny in the blacking trade.

In course of time he gave to his transactions wider scope,—
He dealt in hair-pins, calico, in crockery and soap,
In boots and shoes, in hats and gloves, in walking-sticks, and
socks,
And, later on, he blossomed into chandeliers and clocks.

His shop, in fact, in Blacktown soon the leading shop became,
You'd hardly fail to purchase there a thing that you could name.
To it, alike to buy or lounge, the world Madrassee went,
And sleek Cardozo bowed and smiled, and made his cent. per cent.

And straightway he invested in a big barouche and pair,
And in the "People's Park" at even ate the dusty air.
He was a sight to see, as with his sisters three he sat;
And oh, his native coachman! oh, the breeches, boots, and hat!

'Tis time, perhaps, I should essay to give a sketch of him.
Black eyes and hair, white gleaming teeth, black whiskers curled and trim,
A cunning smile, a shiny tile, a frock coat tight and spruce,
And hue of cheeks like blood contending hard with walnut juice.

His sisters three were decked in silk most gorgeous to behold:
The blaze of colour almost made you blink, as by they rolled.
Great lustrous eyes, and shadowy brows, black crimpy piles of hair,
Complexions—well, you scarce could tell for powder, I declare.

Three times the gaudy equipage would circle round the band,
Then, where the crush was thickest, would draw up and take its stand;
While on the cushioned seat Cardozo'd loll and look about,
And think, "You English lady swells, some day I'll pay you out!

"You buy my goods, you paupers proud, and when I send my bill,
You call it impudence, and say you'll settle when you will;
You bate my price and beat me down, and, now you're cantering past,
You turn your heads away, and say, 'Cardozo, the Half-Caste.'

"Half-caste, indeed! I've blood in me that you'd be glad to own.
Cardozo's deeds in Seville are of course to you unknown.
The sunny South has giv'n an olive tinge to all my race.
You think all men are half-caste who have olive in the face.

"You scorn the colour of my cheeks, but if I'm rightly told,
You'd not object so strongly to the colour of my gold.
I see around me even here what the rupee can do,
And one of these fine days, my dears, I'll marry one of you!"

Time passed. Cardozo richer grew, and one succeeding May
He took a passage, first-class, P. and O., and sailed away.
He kissed his sisters, saying he'd be quickly back again.
Somehow he didn't book himself for any port in *Spain!*

He booked him for Southampton. I suppose he didn't care
For his grand Seville connections, with their stiff patrician air.
One's kin are often chilly, when one's been an exile long.
He thought he'd like a spree in London, and its giddy throng.

He *had* a spree in London. "*De*" Cardozo sounded fair;
And gold will buy a deal within a mile of Leicester Square.
He did the theatres, music halls, the Crystal Palace—oh!
At the sight of the Alhambra how his Spanish blood would glow!

He also did the Park, and,—yes, why should I blush to say?
To drawing-rooms in Eaton Square he managed an *entrée.*
A "*De*"'s a "*De,*" and gold is gold, and his he freely spent,
And people didn't ask him for the proofs of his descent.

His "type" was so "Castilian," and his manners were "so nice,"
His olive hue was "charming;" no one thought of liquorice;
His accent was "so taking," and his singing was "so sweet,"
To hear him talk of Anglo-Indians really was a treat!

One lovely widow nearly fell a victim to his wiles,
His Spanish blood, his gleaming teeth, his presents, and his smiles;
He actually meant to pop the question, when, alas!
She said she had a brother in a regiment at *Madras!*

That lady, I need hardly say, was left a widow still.
Next day he summoned up "mine host" and paid his little bill,
And, thinking it were prudent to levant to pastures new,
He went to Southsea, there to try what Spanish blood would do.

Extremely well it did indeed in that amphibious town—
The "merchant prince from India" decidedly went down:
At yachting parties, picnics, at the Rink, upon the pier,
To see the ladies smile at him was exquisitely queer.

It chanced a country parson—Smith—was lodging in the place,
And Smith a daughter Fanny had, with a seraphic face.
Cardozo met her picnicing, and Cupid's little dart
Forthwith made deadly practice at Cardozo's Spanish heart.

Thought he, "So fair a creature in Madras will make a hit.
Ah! contumelious ladies there, just wait a little bit!
Perhaps it will occur to you next time you canter past
That ladies, white as you, don't spurn Cardozo, the Half-Caste.

"She shall be mine!" he swore. And so he wooed the maid forthwith,
And mentioned his intentions to the country parson, Smith.
And Smith, at once conferring on the matter with his wife,
Said, "Here's a chance for Fanny's being settled well in life!"

I ought to state, *par parenthése*, that Smith had daughters eight,
And how to settle half of them was a quandary great.
So now a wealthy suitor asked permission one to win,
They thanked the Lord, and were not over-squeamish as to skin.

In fine, 'twas settled even to the day and wedding cake;
And Fanny wrote and asked "*The Queen*" what dresses she should take;
When an unwelcome personage appeared upon the scene,—
Lieutenant Smith, a cousin, *who to India had been!*

To think that he just now on native soil should set his feet!
A youth who knew Blacktown as well as we know Regent Street!
And, knowing Blacktown well, knew well its merchant prince, its pride,
Aha! *Cardozo twice had run him in for "goods supplied"!*

Why loiter o'er the sequel?—nay, suffice it to relate,
Cardozo never tried again with white to link his fate.
He found imposture awkward, though sometimes it *does* go down,
And thought it best again to be the tradesman in Blacktown.

There, steadily, as heretofore, he opens out his trade;
And now you'll get a tunic there, if you are not afraid.
And, lately, in the People's Park, the ladies cantering past
Remarked a half-caste bride with him, Cardozo, the Half-Caste!

RAJAH KISTNAMAH HOWDIE DOO.

In a region of Ind where they talk Telugu,
Ruled a Rajah, one Kistnamah Howdie Doo.
His lamented decease, be it known, took place
In the opening part of this year of grace;
So, lest that his mem'ry should not be rewarded
By being by Bell or J. Marshman recorded,
I think it is proper to take up my pen
And inscribe him among my remarkable men,
Whereby the renown that will cling to my Rajah,
Who richly deserves it, of course will be larger.

This Prince, then, was one of those natives enlightened
Who Britons would be, if their faces were whitened.
He'd a soft pleasant mien,
And his habits were clean;
He eschewed chewing chillies, or betel, or bhang;
He talked English well, with a Telugu twang,
And was vastly proficient in drawing-room slang;
He had crossed "the black water," old England to "do,"
And had come back adept in the use of the cue,
With photos, and "billies,"
And bundles of hair
(Chiefly false) pretty sillies
Had given him there,—
Those sillies who somehow feel *so* sentimental
The moment they meet with a rich Oriental.
He could polka and galop with ease and with skill,
And was thoroughly versed in the modern quadrille;
'Twas whispered he even had mastered in France
The graces and steps of its national dance;
He played on the flute,
And he wore a tweed suit,
And his slipper had long given place to a boot.

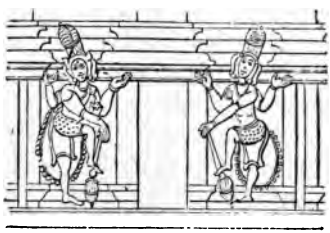
He was sharp at affairs; his extensive dominions
Were really a model Raj,
His ministers men of progressist opinions,
And ditto his subjects at large;
He published reports of his administration,
From which you could judge of the strides that his nation
Was making in wealth and in civilization:
Vaccination was all the go—
There wasn't a pockmark on high or low;

In every district a Health Commission
Examined every soul,
Quite irrespective of age or position—
The unit was *nil* to the whole;
Every town had its municipality,
Marked for its zeal and immense liberality;
Riot and crime
Were extinct some time,
And misdemeanours were on the decrease,
Thanks to a truly efficient police;
The current coin was a mohur in gold;
Treasury notes at a premium sold;
And the curious thronged the museums, to see
Specimens of the antique rupee;
Railways by hundreds were being constructed;
Women by thousands were being instructed,
And widows, no longer a scorn and dismay,
Were the rage, beyond doubt, with the *jeunesse dorée;*
The country was covered with cotton and flax,
And the farmers were fond of the income-tax;
Each regiment was lodged in a six-storied barrack,
And soldiers no more were consumers of arrack;
In fact, it was hard to discover a blot,
Or any advantage this country had not;
For which our good Rajah received, at our hands,
An assurance he'd not be deprived of his lands,
A breech-loading carbine, a steam-working toy,
And a mark of esteem from our Lord Viceroy,
Who said he was foremost of India's sons,
And allowed him a hundred and seventy guns!

* * * * * *

Our Rajah, though versed in the arts of the West
(I wish I could say he'd selected the best),
Though British in many respects, as I've shown,
In some little matters was black to the bone:
He loved the said guns
Nigh as much as his sons;
He was fond of display
In a barbaric way,—
Lots of menials of State,
Very greedy of batta,
To sit at his gate,
Swagger, quarrel, and chatter;
Crowds of pension-receivers,
From beggars to priests,
All devoted believers,
And, some of them, beasts;
Dancing maidens in number
Of exquisite make,

To lull him to slumber
Or keep him awake.
He would spend on a rogue, who'd amuse him an hour,
Half as much as would make up a Princess's dower;
He liked, just for show, to maintain in his stable
More horses than ever to use he was able;
And, though he had these, he was very much prouder
When riding along in an elephant howdah;
Though he played on the flute
As a signor might do't,
He adored the sharp tones
Of the Indian drum,
And the horrible groans
That from native pipes come;
And though he admitted plum-pudding was nice,
He thought there was nothing like curry and rice.
All of which little traits showed he'd great moral worth,
Being true to dustoor, and the land of his birth.



THE COSTLY PEARL.

LIEUTENANT RUDGE was a shrewdish lad,
  Not easy to be cajoled;
And, knowing that, it is doubly sad
  To think how he was sold!

For vulgar dodges, and diddlers male,
  Rudge had a bosom of brass;
But let a woman just tip the scale,
  And Rudge was a terrible ass!

In Joggereebad, a dreary place,
  He had pitched for awhile his tent,
Where you seldom spotted an Europe face
  Whichever way you went.

A "D. P. W." man was he—
  Executive Engineer;
In his bachelor tent there was little tea,
  But plenty of Bass's beer.

He had bundles of pipes, and heaps of books,
  And a saddle the worse for wear,
And a nag of undoubtedly sporting looks—
  A strawberry-coloured mare;

Mofussil meetings had learnt her form,
  And Rudge, on a lottery night,
Had more than once been enabled to warm
  A rash Mofussilite.

In his quiet moods, at the fall of night,
  With his pipe and glass of beer,
He would sit in his shirt and oft indite
  A squib for the "Pioneer."

He had never wished for a gentle face
  To smile from his other chair:
Fancy a woman in such a place!—
  There wasn't room for a pair.

Sam's broad grin was enough for him—
  Sam of the turban red,
Who cooked his dinner, and shaved him trim,
  And made the sahib's bed.

In Joggereebad was a Mister Grant,
  A remarkably canny chiel,—
"Contracting" is often a bonny plant,
  And Grant throve vara weel.

He'd built some bridges and laid some rails—
  Manifold jobs like these.
What if he used old rusty nails?—
  Didn't he get rupees?

Very neat was his bungalow—
  Furniture from Madras;
But the prettiest fitting there, I trow,
  Was a bonnie Perthshire lass.

Jessie Grant was a winsome bride,
And Minister Bruce, her dad,
Wept bitter tears when she left his side
And went to Joggereebad.

Rudge and Grant an acquaintance made,
And Rudge went off to tea;
Although he was more than half afraid
His attire was strange to see.

"Tea," by-the-way, in this case is a word
Used for the sake of a rhyme,—
Toddy more often than tea was stirred,
Never matter the time.

Daintily Jessie would mix the brew,
Gracefully hand the glass,
And her glances soft pierced Rudge right through,
Rudge was a terrible ass!

Then she would finger the keys, and play
Some dreamy sort of a chant,
And Rudge would sit in a dreamy way,
And wish that *his* name was Grant.

Afterward he and Grant would fight
Over a game of chess,
And Jessie, sitting close to the light,
Stitch at a baby dress.

Peacefully, pleasantly passed the eve—
Hateful the hour to part;—
Rudge, when he rose to take his leave,
Felt a chill at his heart.

Out of the cheer of the friendly room,
  Into the lonely night,
Trudged he along in the jungly gloom,
  Thinking that Grant was right.

A week had passed, and Rudge began
  Remarkable views to take:
He wondered what kind of a married man
  Lieutenant Rudge would make,—

What sort of a person a Mrs. Rudge
  Would be, and could she be caught?
He characterized the thought as fudge,
  But nevertheless he thought.

He sighed as he looked at his littered tent.
  And then he looked in his glass:
Whenever he got to sentiment,
  Rudge was a terrible ass!

One day he went to the friendly house
  To drink the conventional tea:
Grant was there, and the pretty spouse,
  And they made a merry three.

Suddenly most significant looks
  Passed from man to wife;
Rudge was scanning some photograph books,—
  "Lovely, upon my life!

"Who, may I ask, is this beautiful girl?
Whose is this face divine?"
"That," said Grant, "is our little Pearl,—
That is a sister of mine.

"Glad you approve of the portrait: she
Certainly's rather nice."
"Lovely," said Rudge, "she appears to me,—
'Gad! she's a Pearl of price!

"Isn't she married?" Rudge inquired;
"Hasn't the right man met?"
"No—she's been certainly much admired,
But she is single yet.

"Pearl's a peculiar girl, you must know,—
Lovers by scores she's had:
One, a Sir Thingamy So-and-so,
Nearly drove her mad.

"She wrote and told me she couldn't stand
The nonsense she had to hear,—
It would drive her, she said, from her native land;
And it really will, I fear."

"What! would she come to India—eh?—
Marry a sub., your Pearl?"
"Upon my conscience I cannot say,
She's such a peculiar girl!

"This I know,—she's a passion for head;
And the scientific part
Of the Royal Army, in gold and red,
Always affected her heart."

"Oh, yes!" said Jessie, "I've heard, she'd call
The Horse Artillery 'dears';
But the fellows she likes the best of all
Are Executive Engineers."

Thought Rudge, "That sounds decidedly queer—
That's coming it rather strong!—
Those fellows are only found out here,
Unless I'm terribly wrong?"

"Quite true," said Grant, "but now and then
They've furlough, I calculate;
They've been known to go home, like other men,
On a sick certificate."

Rudge couldn't do else than recognize
The justice of this remark;
His vision was dazzled by Pearl's big eyes,
And he couldn't keep it dark.

"Come—I'll be plain with you, Grant," he said,—
"Let's settle before I budge;
If your sister comes out, and Rudge ain't dead,
She shall be Mrs. Rudge!"

Said Grant, "That's honest and straight, no doubt;
If she comes, I hope you'll win.
There's *one* objection to getting her out,
The little matter of tin.

"Just now I'm a little hard up, you see,
And her widowed mother—I blush
To be upon family matters so free—
Is never over-flush."

Rudge interposed,—"Don't mention, pray,
  Such a paltry affair as that;
For her passage and outfit Rudge will pay,
  Or Rudge will eat his hat!"

In short, 'twas agreed that sister Pearl
  Should be handed to Rudge at Madras:
You have heard that she was a peculiar girl,
  And Rudge a terrible ass.

A year, as nearly as I can judge,
  Had managed away to slip:
On the pier at Madras stood Grant and Rudge,
  Eagerly watching a ship.

In the offing ahead, the *Smiling Sal*,
  A "magnificent" steamer, lay;
She had screwed herself out through the Suez Canal
  In sixteen weeks and a day!

Pearl, you'll conjecture, was on the bark,
  True to her lover's call:
Had she *not* been on it, you might remark,
  "Why mention the bark at all?"

Yes, Pearl was there; and Grant, with a nudge,
  As he offered a telescope,
Said "There she is, in a blue hat, Rudge,
  Holding on to a rope."

Then Grant, in a big masulah boat,
  Set off to the heaving ship;
And Rudge, for a moment, regretted he wrote,
  And thought of giving the slip.

But he took the photograph from his vest,
  And gazed at the lovely phiz;
And gazing, said, "I suppose it's best.
  She's an angel; 'gad she is!"

The boat came back in a little space,
  With Grant and the topee blue;
And Rudge stood staring down on the face
  That simpered a "How d'ye do?"

It was that of a stale and elderly girl,
  Of forty at least you'd say:
The features were those of the photo'd Pearl,
  But the Pearl of another day!

For a minute or so Rudge seemed like stone,
  Then he suddenly grasped the truth;
And then there came a horrible groan
  From the breast of the injured youth.

"Diddled, by Jingo! Done to a turn!
  Sold, by all that's neat!
Dash it, I'll cut the whole concern!"
  And then he took to his feet,

Fled from the pier, along the beach,
  Fled with his might and main,
Managed the station just to reach
  In time for a starting train:

Flung the lying photograph right
  Under the grinding wheels;
Then raged and fumed, and swore all night
  At matrimonial deals.

The passengers set him down as drunk,
  The guard declared he was mad;
But the morning came, and out he slunk
  At dreary Joggereebad—

Calmer, but crushed with a sorrow deep,
  A sorrow scarce to be told;
And he felt every inch of his cuticle creep,
  As he thought how he'd been sold.

The world heard nothing of Rudge's case,
  Not even a distant hint;
For Grant suggested something, in place
  Of Rudge's appearing in print:

Some thousands of Rudge's bright rupees
  Were sent to Grant in a bag;
And brother and sister felt quite at ease
  As they counted out the swag!

THE BENEDICT'S DREAM.

LATE, as beside the camp-fire sitting
  I watched the sparks, on the sad night-wind
Borne away, in the jungle flitting,
  A vision rose before my mind.

I gazed and gazed till the fire before me
  Flickered into a vacant gloom;
And then a witchery settled o'er me,
  Strange, and I stood in a quiet room.

Fingers soft into mine came creeping;
  A tender bosom pressed close to mine!
We looked upon our children sleeping
  Like two angels infantine.

We gently kissed the little faces,
  And called a blessing down from above;
And over the cot, in sweet embraces,
  Murmured our pride and hope and love.

Then, with footfall light, descending,
  We paced together the garden walk
Hand in hand, content, and blending
  Our content in happy talk.

The moonlight sparkled amid the flowers,
  Wet with dew, and through the tree,
And rained its silver in quivering showers
  Down below on the placid sea.

Nature into our souls seemed breathing
  Love and peace from everything.
Far in the night we loitered, wreathing
  Fancies of what the years would bring.

* * * * *

I awoke: the fire was almost dying;
  The night-wind rustled by with a moan:
No room; no babes; no wife soft-sighing;
  Jungle around, and I sat alone.

THE SENSITIVE FAKEER.

On the bank of a river in Hindostan—
  The "Bagh-o-Bahar" relates—
Lived a very hairy and holy man,
  Who cured the sick at his gates.

He would shut himself up for the space of a year,
  And study the state of his soul,

And only on Sheevrat days would appear
  And make the sufferers whole.

Then at dawn he would plunge in the river, and swim
  Like a fish with sportive mind,
While the fishes would wonder much at him,
  With his long hair streaming behind.

When of this diversion he'd had enough,
  To a shallow part he came,
And smeared some ashes and oily stuff
  All over his skinny frame.

Then full in the reverend gaze of all
  Who were huddling there for the cure,
He made what *we* will his toilet call—
  It was rather light, to be sure.

On a shoulder he laid a towel spare
  It was all the linen he'd got—
Next shook the wet from his matted hair.
  And twisted it up in a knot.

Then stood on the steps, and cleansed his feet
  From the river's clinging ooze.
Then twiddled and made his whiskers neat,
  And shuffled into his shoes.

Some spots, of the size of fourpenny coins,
  On his forehead he made with clay;
Then fastened a string about his loins—
  And, lo! he was dressed for the day.

In another minute or so his prayers,
  With mysterious signs, were done;
And then he slowly ascended the stairs,
  And the doctoring begun.

He took from his nose a jewelled pen,
  And wrote a prescription clear,
For every one of the women and men
  And children pressing near.

Now, on one occasion a patient came
  With something wrong in his head.
The Fakeer's eyes burst into a flame.
  "'Tis a Kunkhujoora!" he said.

"A worm that preys on the human brain—
  Cerebral maggot, no doubt.
The horrible thing is there, 'tis plain.
  Young man, we must cut him out!"

So he took the youth, and his friend as well,
  While the rest remained spell-bound,
To his operating chamber, a cell
  In a rock, deep underground.

Then he seized an instrument, sharply steeled,
  With a semicircular shank,
And a pivot, such as carpenters wield
  In boring a hole in a plank.

And he bored away at the patient's head,
  Till he drilled right into the brain.
"Behold the Kunkhujoora!" he said.
  "He never will vex you again!"

Then he grasped his pincers to pull it out;
But the friend in amazement cried,
"O holy Fakeer, what *are* you about?
You'll be drawing the brain beside!

"The animal lies on the topmost fold,
Curled up, and sticking like glue;
And if you pull him, he'll only hold
The tighter, and drag it too.

"Just heat the pincers a minute or so,
And apply to the creature's back;
No injury then to the brain you'll do,
And the worm will out in a crack."

The holy one pitched away pincers and shoes,
And hurried forth into the air,
And twining his long locks into a noose,
Straight hanged himself in his hair.

Of the fate of the youth, by the "Bagh-o-Bahar,"
No information's supplied;
But perhaps it would hardly be going too far
To conclude that "the beggar died."

The story's a story, and that is all,
But a truth is underlaid:
Woe to the wretched people who call
A native quack to their aid!

And pity it is that all the clan,
Whom their countrymen well can spare,
Don't follow the line of this sensitive man,
And hang themselves in their hair!

O'LEARY'S REVENGE.

Captain de Horse Shou Pinne
  Was shamefully, shockingly vain.
He'd a tidy allowance of tin,
  But a slender allowance of brain.

He was great on a matter of dress—
  An authority none could deny;
His comrades were heard to confess
  That they dreaded his critical eye,

He'd a horror he never concealed
  Of verandah-made dirzee-cut suits,
And a lofty contempt he revealed
  For chucklers' creations in boots.

At the sight of a solar topee
  His feelings were cruelly hurt;
His expression was painful to see
  When he spotted a red flannel shirt.

He objected to garments of white,
  Anglo-Indians frequently wear;
Snowy trousers in mufti, a sight
  Too torturing for him to bear!

But what even afflicted him more
  Were those "local field officer chaps,"
Who, lost to all decency, wore
  White overalls, minus the straps!

With his coats he was calmly content,
  He was publicly proud of his hats;
When he mentioned his bags, eloquent,
  And poetical over cravats.

When, at sunset, most carefully dressed,
  To the band-stand he cantered at ease,
His mind was completely at rest,
  For he thought he was rather the cheese.

His demeanour was stiff as a rock,
  His look was as haughty as sin.
One day, though, he suffered a shock,
  Which settled de Horse Shou Pinne.

It was thus the occurrence befell :—
  A Cornet, O'Leary by name,
A truly Hibernian swell,
  To serve with the regiment came.

Such a Cornet the Captain declared
  He had never beheld in his life :
He was "vulgar" and "carroty-haired,"
  With a brogue "you could cut with a knife."

At O'Leary he'd constantly stare
  With his supercilious eye,
Request him to cut his hair,
  And wear a respectable tie.

The Cornet's temper was tough,
  His disposition was mild ;
But he wasn't at all a muff,
  This gentle Hibernian child.

To the Captain's unflattering talk
  He answered with joke and jest,—
"Shure, Captin, ye've been in Cork,
  For ye're always so nately dhressed.

"Thim trousers remind me much
  Of Patrick O'Flannagan's make ;
That gossamer's jist the touch
  For a Tipperary wake !"

Said de Pinne, as his teeth he ground,
  "He's an impudent nincompoop !"
And Cornet O'Leary found
  It uncommonly hot in the troop.

I have said that his temper was tough,
  That his disposition was mild,—
But the treatment he got was enough
  To make him a little riled.

For the space of a blessèd year
  He was bullied and knocked about,
Till he thought that the time was near
  To pay his tormentor out.

Captain de Horse Shou Pinne
  From home had a quarterly box
Of habiliments, thick and thin,
  From coats to collars and socks.

One evening he went to the Band
  In a rig he considered unique,—
The box had arrived to hand,
  And he'd opened it just a week.

A marvellous thing was his hat—
  Very low, with a beetle-ing brim,
Like the shadowy wings of a bat,—
  He thought that it suited him;

A cunning conception the coat:
  The cloth and the moral were fine—
The dullest observer would note
  Retrenchment in every line.

The style was what connoisseurs call
  The decidedly "cut-away" kind,—
In front there was nothing at all,
  And little to mention behind;

For in front you would see but a curve
  Round a lily-white ocean of shirt,
And behind, if you'd plenty of nerve,
  A shallow excuse for a skirt;

The trousers, a man of the sea
  Would into an ecstasy put,—
Very navally tight at the knee,
  Very navally loose at the foot;

The vest was a phantom of drill
  With a couple of buttons girt,
And apparently purposed to fill
  The office of frame to the shirt;

The collars were pure Vandyke,
  With the points half down to the waist,—
He thought they were "something like,"
  And quite in classical taste;

The tie was a curious knot,
  A marvel of yellow and blue.
The *ensemble* was probably hot,
  But he thought it would "rather do."

Dismounting, he lounged about,
  Strolled leisurely round the ring,
And fancied there wasn't a doubt
  Of his being a beautiful thing.

But lo!—what vision is that—
  What spectre—that dares to float
In another facsimile hat,
  Another facsimile coat?

A lineny lily-white sea
  In a vest as a framework put?
Bags navally tight at the knee,
  Excessively loose at the foot?

A collar of pure Vandyke,
  A yellow and azure tie?
And above 'em, an optic like
  Cornet O'Leary's eye?

No spectre or goblin, that,
  No phantasmagorian elf,—
'Twas that bumptious Hibernian brat—
  Cornet O'Leary himself!

In a twinkle the truth was twigged,
  And de Pinne felt sick at his heart,—
It was Cornet O'Leary rigged
  Up as his counterpart!

Captain de Horse Shou Pinne,
  He turned remarkably red,
As O'Leary advanced with a grin,
  And a jaunty jerk of the head.

Cornet O'Leary bowed,
  He raised the facsimile hat,—
The Captain inwardly vowed
  He would owe him one for that!

As they passed almost cheek-by-jowl,
  De Horse Shou Pinne grew white,
And he said, with a savage growl,
  "You shall hear from me, sir, to-night!

"You think it a capital spree,
  But you'll find it an awkward job.
How dare you imitate me,
  You low young Irish snob?"

"Arrah, Captin, now can't ye be calm?
  Such flattery ye didn't expict;—
Allow me to hook to your arm,
  'Twill have such a nate effict!"

The Captain he choked with wrath,
  But before he could clear his throat,
There stepped from a gharry forth
  Three specimens more of the coat—

Three hats of the marvellous brim—
  Three more of the curious ties—
Three more of the vests bore down on him!—
  He could hardly believe his eyes!

With a curse he turned on his heel,
  And the trouble beyond control
On his face betrayed that the steel
  Was entering into his soul!

He had scarcely taken a pace,
  He had scarcely said, "Low brutes!"
When, meeting him face to face,
  Came other four of the suits!

He saw that the foe was strong,
  The conspiracy widely spread,—
That the retribution of wrong
  Was gathering over his head:

He fled from the horrid spot,
  He cast his raiment away,
And the band-stand knew him not
  For many another day.

He never again did stare
  With supercilious eye—
Tell Cornets to cut their hair,
  And wear a respectable tie.

He shed his effeminate skin
  He heaved his foppery o'er;
And Captain de Horse Shou Pinne
  Is a favourite in the corps.

THE DEAD SHOT.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL BLUSTER was a wonder with his gun:
Munchausen's feats were nothing to the feats that he had done;
His tales about his deadly aim would really make you start:
He never missed, and always shot his tigers through the heart.

He never mauled their bellies, or their legs, or heads, or jaws;
He never tickled up their ribs, posteriors, or paws;
He never notched their noses or their ears, or smashed a bone;
He shot 'em always through the heart, and dropped 'em like a stone.

In every corner in his house you'd see a tiger-skin,—
In each the self-same hole that let his deadly bullet in—
Just close behind the elbow, and above it, in the side:
He'd point it out himself with very pardonable pride.

Perhaps you wouldn't relish quite the loudness of his tone;
Perhaps you'd wonder how it was he always shot *alone;*
Perhaps you'd even ask. Then Colonel Bluster would reply,
"Confound it, sir! do you intend to hint I've told a lie?"

One day a Mister Cunnington, a sporting Bengal judge,
Observed, on leaving Bluster's, *sotto voce*, "This is fudge!
The evidence requires corroboration, past a doubt.
Some day, I think, I'll manage to find Colonel Bluster out."

About a fortnight afterwards, one morning, just at ten,
Sat Bluster down to breakfast with some other sporting men;
Among them Mister Cunnington. They talked of sport, of course,
And Bluster's wondrous yarns came out in more than usual force.

The feed was at its zenith: curry, spatchcock, bacon, eggs,
Chops, sausages, and muffins, walking off as if they'd legs!
When suddenly a man, with little clothing but his skin—
A common jungle peasant fellow—crawled, salaaming, in.

Cried Bluster, "What's that scantly-clothed intruding brute about?
Confound the fellow's impudence!—Khansámah, kick him out!'
Said Cunnington, "Nay, let the wretched devil have his say.
Perhaps a tiger's been and took his little all away!"

The scantly-clothed intruder got a cuff upon the head:
The sleek Khansámah gave it him; and this was what he said—
No, stop—his jungle dialect no soul could understand;
I'll give it as the sleek Khansámah gave it, second-hand:

"O, gurry purvur!"—that's to say, "Protector of the poor"—
"One tiger kill my wife; to-morrow killing me, I'm sure!
He lying in the jungle, six mile off, asleep and still.—
Sa'ib same to me as father, mother. Sa'ib, ride out and kill!"

"Asleep! and where?" roared Bluster. "Jungle-wallah, if you lie,
By Jove, we'll have you skinned!—at least, we'll know the reason why."
"Sa'ib shoot me, place of tiger," said the man, with pleading voice:
"I tell no lie. He take my wife—she fat—and that his choice.

"I go this morning crying for my wife and missing flock.
I see him tiger sleeping underneath one jungle rock.
My wife!—I see no body, Sa'ibs, I only see her head!
He eaten rest all up, boo-hoo! and then he going bed.

"He sleeping day-time nicely, then he wake him up at night,
And, seeing head, he eat it up, boo-hoo! and finish quite!—
Sa'ib take bundook, and shoot him as he sleeping, full of wife!
Then, Sa'ib, I praying God for Sa'ib, and giving Sa'ib my life!"

Said Cunnington, "Come, Bluster, get your rifle, and we'll start.
We'd like to see you plug the beggar neatly through the heart.
A glorious opportunity! Come, now, I'll back the shot.
Who'll back the tiger?" Answered all the rest, "We'd rather not:

"We'll back the shot. It's four to one on Bluster, don't yon see?
The tiger's lying gorged. A lovelier chance there couldn't be!
What! Bluster miss a tiger? Such a thing was never known.
He always shoots 'em through the heart, and drops 'em like a stone."

Lieutenant-Colonel Bluster, in his sleeve, expressed an oath
Concerning judge and peasant, most unflattering to both.
Then took his trusty rifle down, and mounted his dog-cart,
And all the party started for the plugging through the heart.

They drove six miles, and then beside a jungle dense they stopped;
And all, at beck of peasant, on their knees in silence dropped;
Then crawled away, scarce breathing, through the brambles, grass, and leaves,
And looking very like a gang of cattle-lifting thieves.

"Hi! Hush!" The creeping jungle-wallah raised his skinny hand,
And all around the depths of jungle vegetation scanned.
Anon he pointed forwards—then he glided to a tree,
And whispered in his dialect the guttural for "See!"

They crowded up behind him, and, a hundred yards ahead,
There, sure enough, they saw the tiger snoozing on his bed.

Beneath a rock, with limbs outsprawled, mouth open, he reclined,
The attitude, in fact, of tiger who had freely dined.

In solemn stagey whisper Mister Cunnington observed,
"Bluster, now to slay the monster is for you reserved,
To venge the eaten woman! Let the fancy nerve impart.
Fire first: we'll follow if you miss. Now plug him through the heart!"

I ought to state, the rest had brought their trusty rifles too;
"No use, of course," they said, but still the proper thing to do.
And Bluster'd said, "You fellows, pray, as well your rifles bring;
For on a heavy breakfast one will sometimes miss a thing."

He kneeled him down, and aimed. They also kneeled, hard-breathing, all—
A silence like the grave. You might have heard a sparrow fall.
Each moment like an age! He dropped the muzzle of his gun,
And muttered, "It's the muffin, for I know I've eaten one."

Again he raised the muzzle, and again he took an aim:
"You fellows, if I miss," he said, "you must the muffin blame."
Another epoch of suspense. At last, a flash and bang!
A cloud of smoke before them as to feet the sportsmen sprang.

It cleared away. The tiger lay just as he lay before,
He didn't even flick his tail, or make attempt to roar.
He lay with limbs out-sprawling, and his jaw still wide apart.
Said Cunnington, "It's clear as day, you've shot him through the heart!

"Come, Bluster, I congratulate you warmly on the feat.
You've killed him as he lay. By Jove, the shot was deuced neat!"
And all the rest said, "Bluster, you indeed have kept your word.
A cockney sportsman couldn't better pot a sitting bird."

Then crawled the jungle-wallah forth, and crouched at Bluster's feet,
And said, in jungle lingo, something doubtless very sweet;
Then, pointing to the tiger, ran as fast as you could shoot,
And, in a jiffey, stood gesticulating by the brute!

He shook his fist and taunted him, and pulled him by the tail—
When, out it came! and in his hand he swung it like a flail!
Then, stooping low, he looked right down the tiger's open jaw;
Put in his hand: withdrew it, and—*the hand was full of straw!*

He held it up and showed it. Then he tossed it overhead,
And, as it streamed above him, laughed a hideous laugh, and fled.
And Bluster, looking round, no sign of brother sportsmen saw;
They'd left him to his glory, and the tiger stuffed with straw!

No more does Colonel Bluster talk of shooting through the heart:
If e'en you mention such an organ, he will wince and start!
And if you speak of straw, you'll see him turn a strawy hue.—
O Cunnington, it was indeed a cruel thing to do!

THE LOAFER.

WHO is that standing
  Outside in the heat,
Gruffly demanding
  A something to eat?
Rags on his body, no shoes to his feet;
  Hair foully growing;
  Disfigured past knowing:
  Blistered, and showing
    Limbs shrivelled to tan;
  Hangdog and scowling,
    As under a ban;
  Stay,—is that prowling
    Poor wretch a white man?

English? Oh, think of this!
Englishmen we!
How did he sink to this?
Who can he be?

* * * * * *

Only a loafer, a beggarly vagrant,
Guilty of having no work and no purse.
Send him away, for the fellow's not fragrant.
Aiding these gentry but renders them worse.

Who is that rascal
Disturbing the peace,
With struggles that task all
The city police?
Whom are they hustling
So roughly along?
Why all that bustling
And jabbering throng?
Doubtless some vicious
And half-drunken brute,
Whom to cage were judicious,
And flogging would suit.
Hark at his shouting
And cursing, and—see—
English past doubting!—
Now who can he be?

* * * * * *

Only a loafer, our people disgracing,
Guilty of having no purse and no work,
Taking to drink and his nature debasing.—
Give him hard labour and don't let him shirk.

Who is that tramping
Along in the dust,

Hungrily champing
His last bit of crust;
Staggering fearfully
'Neath the sun's glare,
Shining so cheerfully
On his despair;
Passing the village,
The shop, and the farm;
Doing no pillage,
Attempting no harm;
Weary miles trudging,
With face to the west;
Footsore, and grudging
The cowherds their rest;
Drawing their pity
Or scorn on his head—
Hopes fixed on the city
Where vagrants are fed?
Vain, for he's sinking,
Piteous to see!
He's not been drinking.—
Who can he be?

* * * * * *

Only a loafer, a spiritless creature,
Guilty of having no work and no purse.
Worthlessness branded in every feature.
These sort of people are India's curse.

Who is that lying
There all of a heap,
As if he were dying,
Or drunk, or asleep;

The morning sun glaring
  Right into his face,
All fixed as if staring
  At yon busy place?
Doubtless he's wandered
  For many a league,
And now, his strength squandered,
  Has dropped from fatigue.
And what is this packet
That bulges his jacket?
Let's see what it's saying:—
  "Is honest, adept,
But the works are not paying,
  Few hands can be kept,"
And look—'tis a Station
  Up-country and far;
Discharge meant starvation.
  How hapless some are!

Bah!—'tis only a loafer, a do-nothing wretch,
  Who may have been honest, perhaps, at one time;
Some fellow who couldn't work long at a stretch.
  These rascals all swell up our journal of crime.

But stay—look intently;
  Let's cover his head,
And speak of *him* gently—
  The loafer is dead!

* * * * * *

Only a loafer! an eyesore, and giving
  Heathen occasion to blacken our name,
Lacking ostensible sources of living;—
  Clap them in prison, *they all are the same!*

AS WISE AS A SERPENT.

A BATH-ROOM EPIC.

FROM time immemorial men have agreed
That serpents are very 'cute creatures indeed.
The notion as certainly got into vogue
As that every fox is a thief or a rogue.
And men not alone to this fancy inclined;
Old Nick, 'twould appear, was of a similar mind,
Or why, when he basely proposed to deceive
That nice little soft little sweet little Eve,
Did he get himself up as a sneak of a snake,
And not as a creature of handsomer make?

I propose to narrate a remarkable case,
Which happened quite lately before my own face;
And I think you'll admit, when my yarn has been spun,
That snakes are at all events hard to be done.

'Twas a very hot morning in Thingamypore;
There had never been such a hot morning before.
I bawled for my tub. 'Twas the work of a minute
To rush from my bed-room and fling myself in it.

Well, I sat in the water, and revelled, and rolled,
Through my heat-thirsty pores deep inhaling the cold,
Dashing it down on my head, in my face,
With a whoop and a splashing all over the place,
When—and just at the "moment supreme" of my joys—
I heard 'neath the tub a peculiar noise.

The sound was a sound which makes guinea-pigs quake,
And men, for the matter of that. 'Twas a snake!
Slowly from under the tub he appeared,
Hissing; then stopped, and his angry crest reared;
And I cannot declare I felt eased in my mind
When I saw 'twas a cobra of deadliest kind.

He sat there erect, wide expanding his hood,
As if he'd get at me, if only he could;
But I stuck to my tub, and its lofty green side
Was a bulwark from which his assault I defied.

A minute—two minutes—three minutes had passed;
I wondered how long this was going to last,
When (perhaps sudden panic had entered his soul)
He wriggled himself to the waste-water hole;
In he popped in a minute, and, lo and behold!
Was half through in another. But *wasn't* he sold!

An impulse heroic coursed swift through my veins
To give that old cobra a dance for his pains.
From my tub like a burglar I noiselessly stept,
Like an Indian stalking a chicken I crept,

With a grin of delight, I believe, on each feature,
At thinking what glory to diddle the creature.

I stood by the hole—I stood over his tail;
I seized it, and hauled as you'd haul at a sail.
He wriggled and hissed with a horrible sound,
But the hole was so small that he couldn't turn round;
So I held him there writhing, and laughed as he tried,
Half his length in the bath-room, the other outside.

"Low cowardly reptile! oh, wriggle away!
I've got you, friend Scales, if you wriggle all day.
There, that's for yourself" ('twas a pinch). "There's another.
Oh! didn't it hurt? And now one for his mother!"

I pinched till I tired, for my heart it was hardened,
And really I think I may ask to be pardoned:
Comes but once in a life such a grand opportunity
Of bullying a cobra with utter impunity.

At length, wearied out, he surrendered himself,
Lay still as a bottled one up on a shelf,
Apparently careless of all that I called him,
And even the fact that my fingers had mauled him.

Suddenly—oh, my friend, wasn't he deep!—
Possibly thinking I had fallen asleep,
Summoning all of his wonderful strength,
He gave a huge tug, and nigh rescued his length.

Then recommenced our tremendous affray,
Both of us straining and twisting away;
But his frantic attempts not a whit could avail,
For my grasp it was set like a vice on his tail.

The combat had reached now a furious stage,
The snake was half mad, and I felt in a rage;
I resolved as I pulled with my might and my main,
To die or to diddle him over again.
So I braced myself up, and I gave a fierce haul,
And flung him back, whack! 'gainst the opposite wall.

Down he came, flop! and it must have been riling
To see me secure in my tub again, smiling.
"Sold again, Scales!" cried I, growing quite cheerful.
Answered he naught but a hiss that was fearful.—
Hiss? 'twas a sound would have made a mop bristle!
Hiss? it was only just short of a whistle!
It didn't mean simply dislike to *my* face,
It told of contempt for the whole human race—
A hatred implacable, born ere the Fall,
And lasting till one of us go to the wall.

But now to my point. He appeared to be thinking,
At least so I judged from the way he was blinking;
And, having concluded—it's true on my soul!—
Retreated, quite coolly, *tail first* to the hole.
Steadily, slowly, his face to the foe,
Showing his poisonous fangs, white as snow,
Proudly expanding his great spectral hood,
He backed, till in front of the channel he stood.
Pausing, he seemed to say, "Now, silly man,
Tread on my tail if you like, or you can!"
Then in the hole he inserted his end,
And bobbing politely a "Good-bye, my friend!"
Vanished, me looking the while like a flat!
Hang me, if snakes are not 'cute after that!

TWADDLE.

Two members of the Council were
  Hot seasoning at Ooty;
And often in their walks the pair
  Conversed about their dooty.

"Oh, Peter Straight," said John McDoo,
  "I feel with deep contrition
That all of us have been untrue
  To our exalted mission.

"This mighty land strange Providence
  Has given to our keeping;
And we appear at its expense
  Advantage to be reaping.

"'Twas given us in trust, you know,
  To drill and educate it,
And when the job is finished, go
  And straight evacuate it.

"But—oh,—from this our conduct's wide,
  It doesn't bear reviewing;
It really makes me blush inside
  To think what we are doing.

Of barracks we erect a lot,
  As if—the thought is humbling—
We meant to stay, and they were not
  Perpetually tumbling.

"We tell the natives to repair
  In studious crowds to college;
Then stick 'em into places where
  They don't require the knowledge.

"We tell 'em to beware of rum,
  And punish 'em for drinking;
But cry 'pray grow your opium!'
  Because it pays like winking.

"We say—'You niggers, why object
  To wife emancipation?
How possibly can you expect
  A decent population?'

"'Ah!—that,' they say, ''s a doubtful point:
  Our women might be skittish;'
And then they lift a finger-joint
  Contemptuous at the British.

"'Come, fraternize, be one of us,'
  We cry, 'what harm can skin do?'
And yet our ladies make a fuss
  At dancing with a Hindoo.

"Oh, Peter Straight, bethink you, pray,
  What wicked nonsense this is!
When shall we ever do away
  With such-like prejudices?

"When we, the swells, the upper ten,
  Show to the humbler sorters
That honest native gentlemen
  Are free to wed our daughters;

"When we admit the claims of worth,
  Remove official taboos,
And open each and every berth
  To influential Baboos;

"Give clever men, though country-bred,
  Responsible positions;
Put native Generals at the head
  Of Stations and Divisions;

"And in the civil branches do
  Away with ancient grudges,
By giving amplest power to
  Our virtuous native Judges;

"When we shall reach the final day
  Of working our accounts ill,
And start by cutting down the pay
  Of us, the coves in Council;

"Then, Peter Straight, and only then,
  Can we defend our dealings,
And boldly claim before all men
  To have enlightened feelings."

To John McDoo said Peter Straight—
  "This programme may be pleasant,
But I, for one, say, let us wait,
  'Twould hardly do at present.

"It doesn't me so clearly strike,
  But mine's a common noddle;
It sounds to me, sir, very like
  Unmitigated twaddle.

"You say we hold the land in trust,
  And for a little span, sir;
The truth is, that we'll hold it just
  As long as e'er we can, sir!"

LE BEAU SABREUR.

Of all the sabreurs whom the mutineers slew,
  And sent 'em to blazes or further,
By chalks the successfullest I ever knew
  Was distinguished old Colonel McMurther.

A dandy was he, curly-haired, and he stood
  In his stocking six foot and a quarter.
Though sixty and odd, he was lusty, and could
  Drink a gallon of brandy-and-water.

He told me one day as we sat in long chairs,
  And I modestly listened and wondered,
Of a battle in which he'd destroyed 'em by pairs,
  Till he'd slaughtered exactly a hundred.

"I rode," he narrated, "slap bang at their front,
Where a crowd of their horse pirouetted,
And chopped 'em to bits till my sabre was blunt,
And I galloped to get it re-whetted.

"I went to my tent, gave a touch to my hair,
Just tossed off a brandy-and-soda,
And, when 'twas re-sharpened, I mounted my mare,
And back at the devils I rode her.

"A troop of 'em charged with a rush and a yell,
And we met with a snorting and splutter;
But I cut 'em all down, and I recollect well
That it felt like the cutting of butter.

"Having slaughtered the most of this cavalry band,
To ease my old mare I alighted;
And on Infantry Sepoys I practised my hand,
And—I think I was getting excited;

"For they stood pretty close, and my cuts took effect:
Heads flew like round-handers at cricket.
It was glorious! only to swipe, and neglect
Altogether to think of your wicket!

"For an hour and a half, as content as a prince,
I continued this easy employment;
Oh, never such moments of ecstasy since!
By Jove, sir, 'twas *thorough* enjoyment!

"I couldn't help humming a favourite air
Through the yells and the roar and the racket,
And laughed, though the cannon-balls ruffled my hair,
And I got a few spots on my jacket.

"But suddenly up came the old Brigadier,
And he shouted, 'Come out of that, Colonel!

You've slaughtered enough of these poor wretches here;
It's shocking—it's simply infernal.

"'It ain't *comme il faut* for a man of your rank
To be carving away like a private,'
My reply—yes, I think, we had better leave blank;
I hardly thought *he* would survive it.

"'Hold, Colonel McMurther,' he cried; 'it is time
That you ceased for humanity's sake, sir.
In a Christian such carnage as this is a crime,
In a Colonel it is a mistake, sir!'

"But I heeded him not, as some answer I hissed,
And I gave it 'em hot, by the Lord, sir;
Till he roared at the top of his voice—'I insist
You immediately give me your sword, sir!'

"I gave him my sword. 'Twas a terrible blow.
That order, by Jingo, did stab hard!
But, as soon as he left me, I rushed on the foe,
And I had my revenge with the scabbard.

"It wasn't so easy, I'm free to admit,
But right through their turbans I crashed it;
Till I came to a nigger whose head *wouldn't* split,
But rang like an anvil, and—smashed it."

He ceased; then he took from their place by his bed
The battered old friends that he cherished,
And murmured, "What oceans of blood you have shed
What a lot by you darlings have perished!"

From which you will see that the gallant sabreur,
After all, was immensely soft-hearted.
There were tears in his eyes, I distinctly aver,
When I praised the old sword, and departed.

THE MATRIMONIAL INDENT.

THE Reverend Ernest Geist
  Was a German missionaree.
He'd already been doubly spliced,
  But he wished for Number Three.

So he sat himself down with his pen,
  And he wrote to the Basel Board,—
"Right reverend gentlemen,
  And brethren in the Lord:

"Your obedient Ernest Geist
  Has served you well in his life;
He's already been doubly spliced,
  But he wishes another wife.

"He's conscious that being alone
  Is never well for a man;
And it's worse in the tropical zone,
  In heathenish Hindostan,

"In this dark outlandish place,
  Where the people are dark and rude,
And there's never an Europe face
  To lighten your solitude.

"There is only Ramiah, boy,
  And Maree, the catechist.
And Sammy, the cook I employ,
  With a sweeper to assist,

"With whom to exchange a word,
  Or indulge in a friendly chat;
And, gentlemen, it's absurd
  To expect me to live on that!

"You have sent me spouses twain,
  Two mädschens meek and kind,
And—goodness knows they were plain,
  But, gentlemen, never mind;—

"I have laid them both in the tomb,
  In the shade of a toddy-tree,
And returned to my bachelor gloom
  And my lonely cup of tea.

"I thank you for favours past,
  For the two lamented frows,
And hope you'll confer a last,
  In the shape of another spouse.

"And permit me to humbly suggest,
  With all respect for the pair
Who have gone too soon to their rest,
  That you don't send carroty hair."

* * * * * *

The letter was sealed, and sent
  Direct to the Basel Board;
And agreeably to that indent
  A mädschen went abroad.

To the nearest seaport town,
  To receive the fluttering Miss,
The reverend Geist went down.
  He gave her a holy kiss;

He called her his lamb, his own;
  He offered a fitting prayer;
But he cried, with an inward groan,
  "Again it's carroty hair!"

OUR RIDE.

THE village cocks were crowing,
And the hungry cattle lowing,
  Waiting round the fastened gates for lazy
    Cowherds sleeping long;
The sun was redly rising,
In their homeward prowls surprising
  Late hyænas, slouching by, as Smith
    And I rode swift along.

The morning air smote keenly,
And we galloped on serenely,
  Drinking in the grateful freshness
    Of the peep-o'-day in Ind;

We were bound to show at muster,
So we gave our steeds a duster,
  And we swept across the jungle
    Like the monsoon wind.

Onward, onward, fast we clattered,
Under trees where monkeys chattered,
  Over nullah, shallow stream, low marsh,
    And sandy river-bed;
Past old temples, where a Brahmin
Blew a blast that was alarmin'
  On the sacred horn, to tell the land
    The night was dead.

Past an ancient fort in ruins,
Rousing thoughts of bloody doin's;
  Past a bowrie yet untroubled
    By the dawning of the day;
Past a roadside camp of carters,
Trying to be early starters,
  Urging bullocks with a shouting
    To arise from where they lay.

Fainter grew the chinkle-chinkle
Of their collars; and the tinkle
  Of the louder bells of cattle
    Travelled now upon the breeze;
For the morn was brighter beaming;
And the herds released were streaming
  In long columns to their pastures,
    In the distant trees.

Then the early village maiden,
With her shining pitcher laden,

Moved with gait erect and stately
To the well across the plain.
And some swarthy magnate urban,
With a wrapper round his turban
And his chin, rode jingling by us,
With his motley train.

Then a group of woodsmen passes,
With the faggots on their asses;
And a drove of oxen plodding
Each with grain-filled sack;
And a postal-runner, ringing
All his little bells, and swinging
With his measured trot, and letters
In the leather at his back.

Sights that seemed an indication
We were drawing near the Station;
And we held aright, for suddenly
There boomed the morning gun;
At the sound our eager horses
Seemed to feel replenished forces,
And they tossed their crests, as knowing
That their toil was nearly done.

Clomb the sun now swiftly higher,
Like a blazing ball of fire;
Frequent grew the roadside cabins
And the cultivated plots;
Market people townward walking,
With their wives behind, or talking
At the cross-roads or the resting-stones,
In many-coloured knots.

Then a gaudy cart went creeping,
With its freight of nautch-girls peeping
  Through the parted curtains, showing
    Saffron cheek and jewelled nose;
And we heard their saucy laughter
At the sahibs, coming after,
  As we galloped through their dust,
    Which high in whirlwinds rose.

Next a sahib and a lady,
Riding where the trees were shady;
  And we knew for certain now our course
    Was well-nigh run;
And the Station from a turning,
We described, already burning,
  With its glaring, staring buildings,
    In the splendour of the sun.

We could see the sunlight quiver
Down below us on the river,
  And glance on glitt'ring cupola
    And mosque and minaret,
Where the native city, teeming
With its thousands, and redeeming
  All the landscape from its newness,
    On the river bank was set.

Far beyond, the river faded,
In the depth of forests shaded,
  And the eye on mountain rested,
    Rising indistinctly blue;
And I cried—"Oh, Smith, old fellow,
You may doubt it, but I tell you,

You may travel many miles to find
So glorious a view."

And Smith, not sentimental
Upon matters Oriental,
Replied—"The panorama
May perhaps your fancy suit;
And that dirty native city
May to you seem rather pretty,
But it only makes *me* think—
'Oh, what a splendid place to loot!'"

HOMEWARD BOUND.

So my name is in Orders, old friend, at last,
And the days of my soldiering soon will be past;
And I think if I hurry, perhaps I may
Be home with them all upon Christmas Day.

Thirty odd years is a longish span,
Making a gap in the life of a man;
And it's thirty and odd since I looked on the face
Of the dear old Dad in the dear old place.

Thirty and odd, sir, and happily spent,
Taking the good and the bad that was sent:
Shadows and sorrows have crossed my line—
But where is the life that is *all* sunshine?

Craving I've had, sir, for home and rest,
For my boys to be near, and my wife on my breast,
For a peep at the couple who gave me birth—
But isn't there craving all over the earth?

Of deep disappointment, disgust, despair,
And sickness of body I've had my share—
But India isn't the land alone
Where men dig for a nugget and find a stone.

Do the stones dismay the digger bold?
Aren't they forgot when he lights on gold?
Many a stone have I found, it is true,
But I've had my share of the nuggets too.

You may smile, and others may laugh in their sleeve,
And many there are who will never believe;
But the years that I've passed in this Eastern clime—
Thirty and odd—were a happy time.

I am one, as you know, of a bygone set;
Thirty-year men are not often met;
And India's been as a home to me,
As happy as mine had a chance to be.

For a man, who has pride and an empty purse,
May easily live in a land that is worse.
And now that the moment has come to part,
There's something resembling a pang in my heart.

I can scarcely credit the fact, old friend,
That my soldiering draws so nigh to the end;
That I, who have joked at the rest, myself
Am about to be finally placed on the shelf.

Why, it seems as if many a sun hadn't set
Since the old Dad called me his smart cadet;
And I see the tear in my mother's eye,
As she kissed and kissed me, and sobbed good-bye.

That soft sweet eye, with its lashes wet,
There it is, on my heart, sir, yet,—
There it is set as a gem in a shrine;
But never again will it look in mine.

For she died exactly ten years ago,
And she spoke of me in the final throe,
And she wished that *all* of the lads were near,—
That was one of my sorrows here!

The Dad, they tell me, is broken much,
Still you don't at his age see many such:
He toddles about in the open air,
Cheery, and busying here and there;

Now in the garden, now in the park;
Now in the dairy cool and dark;
Now in the stable, fondling o'er
The favourite hunter he rides no more.

Then in the farm he potters about,
And has his chat with the steward stout;
And every Sunday he walks to church,
Down the drive by the grove of birch.

Mary trudges along by his side,—
She was always a pet of his, my bride,—
And they always stop at the mulberry-tree
I planted, a youngster, and talk of me.

And oft, as they walk, the story's told
Over again of the Colonel bold,
Who at Lucknow won his Mary dear—
That was one of my nuggets here.

And how he won in the mutiny's strife,
Honour and glory, as well as a wife,
Medals and mention, and, last, a C.B.,—
Indian life *has* its joys, you see.

Then when the daylight dies into gloom,
The lamps burn bright in the dining-room,
And Dad and Mary each take their place
At the long oak table, face to face.

And after dinner, a sudden din,
And two little urchins come romping in,
Climbing and rumpling Grandpapa's shirt,
Loudly demanding a big dessert.

Often and oft, on India's plains,
Lone, dejected, and racked with pains,
Lying awake in my tent at night,
Cheered have I been by these visions bright.

And I cannot, old friend, help wondering how
They look, the Dad and Mary, now;
For they've got my letter in which I say
Perhaps they will see me on Christmas day.

I think to the Dad 'twill be almost a blow—
Sorrow and joy commingled so:
Joy to behold once more my face,—
Sorrow that *one* isn't there to embrace.

Mary, dear Mary,—I see her start,—
Her face all pale with the joy at her heart;
She holds the letter, and kisses the sheet,
Thanking God in a murmur sweet.

And she runs, half-mad, to the nursery door,
And tells them papa is coming once more!
Kissing and hugging the urchins twain,
As if she had lost them and found them again.

Then, breathless, she writes to my brother Jack
To say that I really am coming back;
And to Harry and Jane, to wend their way,
That we may all meet upon Christmas Day.

Jack has retired, you know; but I'm told
He often regrets the day that he sold:
He's married a wife, and has settled down
To a box on the moors and a house in town.

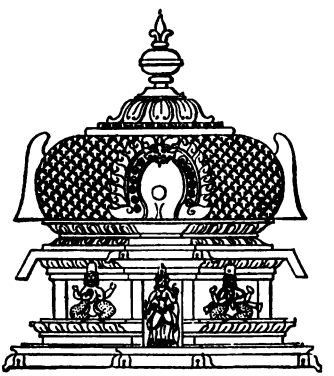
He'd think he'd committed a dreadful crime
Not to visit the Dad at Christmas-time;
And I'm sure that he almost jumps from his seat
When he reads that we're going so soon to meet.

And Harry, the sailor,—who's always there
If leave's to be had, and he's cash to spare,—
How glad he will be! I fancy half
That I hear the ring of his jovial laugh.

And Jane, who married the big dragoon,
What a fuss she'll make at my coming so soon!
All of them, bless them! they'll all be gay
To think of the meeting on Christmas Day.

Yes, we shall meet, and home has a spell,
Though I've loved the land of my sojourn well.
The work is over, the sojourn done,—
Fare thee well, thou Land of the Sun!

Nothing but rest, and home, in store;
Never again to wander more;
Thanking God for the present, and yet
Linked to the past with a fond regret.



CUPID AFLOAT.

To see young Sniggles and Mary Jane,
  His recently-wedded wife,
On the voyage out, was a thing I must fain
  Remember all my life.

'Tis good to contemplate human bliss,
  For there's always enough of woe;
But I never saw any that equalled this,
  Or a couple that went on so.

At first their spirits appeared to droop,
  For it wasn't agreeable weather;
And they groaned and shivered upon the poop,
  And they went to the side together.

But when it calmed, and the bloom appeared
  Again on the lady's cheek,
They loveyed and doveyed, and ducked and deared,
  From end to end of the week.

They spooned from morn to eventide,
  They lived and they breathed on spoon;
When the weather forbad the spooning outside,
  They did it in the saloon.

They never wearied, they seemed each day
  Fresh ecstasy to imbibe;
And they gazed in each other's eyes in a way
  That I really can't describe.

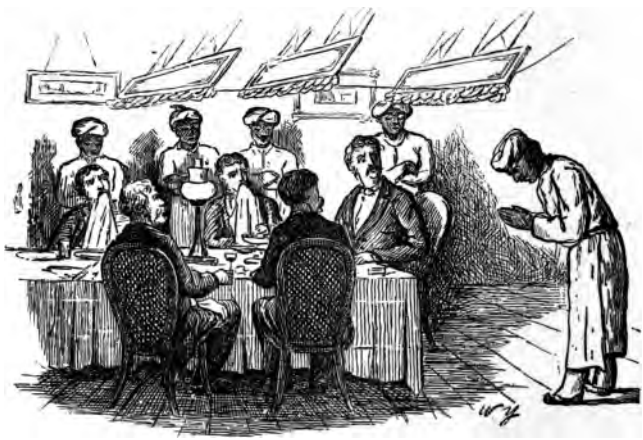
And once ere long 'twas my lot to see
  What shocked my sensitive taste—
They were sitting as close as wax, and he
  Had his arm about her waist.

They had quite forgotten the world and me,
  Till I uttered a loud "Ahem!"
Ah! what were I, and the ship, and the sea,
  And the passengers all, to them?

And later on in the voyage, I grieve
  To state that it got to this,
Before you could properly call it eve
  They were seen and heard to kiss!

Oh, lucky Sniggles! Oh, happy pair!
  'Tis pleasant to be adored;
But to do it in public's hardly fair
  To the other folk on board.

And I hope when the flush of passion dies,
  And you're both a little older,
That—only before third parties' eyes—
  Your spooning will be colder.



THE POLICE-WALLAH'S LITTLE DINNER.

I'M somehow feeling a little bored
With all their district gup;
They're not bad fellows; but, thank the Lord,
The party has broken up!

There's McCaul, the Collector, our biggest gun,
A capital hand at whist,
And passable company, when he's done
Prosing over "the List."

I'm sick to death of his grumbling, though,
For ever about his luck;
And the story I rather think I know
Of every pig he's stuck.

There's Jones, his clever conceited sub.,
The "Competition" elect,
A youth into whom I should like to rub
A liniment of respect;

An honest lad, though a bit absurd!
And his diction may be choice,
But I think we should like him more if we heard
Rather less of his voice.

There's Tomkins, our Civil and Sessions Judge,
A pompous ponderous Beak,
Who sneers at McCaul's decisions as fudge,—
We know it's professional pique.

On a point of position he's rather a snob,
At bottom a kindly man:
Show that you think he's the district nob,
And he'll lend you a hand, if he can.

There's little Sharp, the Surgeon, in charge
Of the Central Suddur jail:
He's a habit of taking very large
Potions of Bass's ale;

A good little fellow—a first-rate pill—
Zealous beyond the ruck;
You couldn't consult a better, till
Nine o' the night has struck;

I've known him do many a kindly act:
    The little man came out strong
When the cholera broke, and the jail was packed
    With the cholera-smitten throng.

Still, after dinner he's hardly fit
    To tackle a question deep;
We find it better to let him sit
    And sip himself to sleep.

There's the Padre, the Reverend Michael Whine,
    The sorrowfullest of men,
Who tells you he's crushed with his children nine,
    And what'll he do with ten?

A circle of worthy folk, indeed,
    Each of the five, in his sphere;
But it's heavyish work to have 'em to feed
    More than twice in the year.

Two of 'em think it a favour quite
    To eat my Michaelmas geese,
Let 'em—perhaps they might be right—
    I'm only in the police—

Only a Staff Corps skipper, a drudge,
    On a hundred and fifty a week.
Fancy my asking a Sessions Judge!—
    Wasn't it awful cheek?

It's nasty, too, my "competitive" friend,
    To stand your bumptious air:
We shall both go home, I suppose, in the end,—
    You won't be so bumptious there!

First we had Mulligatawny soup,
Which made us all perspire,
For the cook, that obstinate nincompoop,
Had flavoured it hot as fire.

Next a tremendous fragmentary dish
Of salmon was carried in,—
The taste was rather of oil than fish,
With a palpable touch of tin.

Then, when the salmon was swept away,
We'd a duckey stew, with peas,
And the principal feature of that *entrée*
Was its circumambient grease.

Then came the pride of my small farm-yard,—
A magnificent Michaelmas goose:
Heavens! his breast was a trifle hard;
As for his leg, the deuce!

Last, we'd a curry of ancient fowl:
In terror a portion I took,—
Hot?—I could scarcely suppress a howl—
Curse that fiend of a cook!

The conversation of course began
Anent the coming monsoon:
Plentiful rain, said every man,
Would be a tremendous boon:

Paddy was dying, would fail again;
Raggee would never be ripe;
McCaul was anxious to see the rain,
And hoped it would bring the snipe.

It started him fair, that brutal bird,
    And he rapidly got to boar;
And many a shaggy one's fate we heard
    We'd all of us heard before.

Then "Competition" must have his say:
    His talk was somewhat big,—
Shooting snipe was good in its way,
    And so was sticking pig;

But India wanted a class of men
    Of the intellectual type,
With a mind to study, an eye to ken,
    Weightier things than snipe,—

Thinking more of the busy quill
    Than the last-invented gun,—
Striving a noble *rôle* to fill,
    And reporting what they'd done.

Hiccoughed the Doctor,—"That'sh yer sort,—
    That'sh the ticket for you,—
Write a *couleur de rozshe* report,—
    Write, whatever you do.

"Once knew a fellah who never stirred
    Out of his office chair:
Wrote a report. Bigwigs inferred
    He'd been everywhere."

The Reverend Whine here interposed,—
    "Brethren, it's very clear,
The best report that is ever composed
    Won't stop things getting dear.

"It scarcely becomes me to repine,
But it's sad for family men;
Already I'm burdened with children nine—
What'll I do with ten?"

Said the Sessions Judge,—"Upon my life,
It's hard a reply to give;
But why did you go and take a wife,
Not being able to live?"

A general laugh. The Collector stout
Thought it a joke immense,
And the Doctor hiccoughed something about
"Marry, and blowsh expensh!"

Then there was sherry, and handing round
Of ginger and other fruits;
Then, in a silence quite profound,
The lighting of big cheroots.

Then came cards, and soda-and-b.,
On to the snowy board;
And four of us made a whist partie,
And the little Doctor snored.

I and the Parson lost a mohur,
At which the Collector joked;
Once he forgot himself, and swore,—
But then the Parson revoked.

Then there was brandy-pawnee round,
And the Parson ate some cake;
And the Doctor snored with a horrible sound,
And choked himself awake.

Lastly, we each the other bored
With the usual district gup,
And then they departed. Oh, thank the Lord
The party has broken up!

DECEITFUL JONES.

THE Indian sun was sinking down
  Behind the toddy-trees,
When Jones before Miss Adelaide Brown
  Went down upon his knees.

Now, Jones he was a subaltern in
  The Bundelcund Hussars,
And, like a man, he had spent his tin,
  Or rather his dear Papa's.

And the worst of it was, that all the girls
  That he loved—and they were many—
Though sweet as sugar and fair as pearls,
  Had never a single penny.

But Adelaide Brown, the freckly-skinned,
  He had heard on trusty grounds,
If not the prettiest maid in Ind,
  Had a thousand or so of pounds.

So Jones at a picnic said to himself,
  As he picked her up a curl,
"I scorn a fellow who'd wed for pelf,
  But I really love that girl.

"She hasn't the vacant eyes of the dove,
  And her hair may come from Truefitt's;
But if she doesn't accept my love,
  I shall certainly die of the blue fits!"

The sun was sinking down, as I've said,
  When the much-enamoured Jones
Removed the topee from off his head,
  And went on his marrow-bones.

And Adelaide Brown, who got her hair,
  Or a deal of it, from afar,
Lisped gracefully that she didn't care
  If she took her brave Hussar.

Old time, as usual, jogged along,
  And Jones was kindly told
That the khubbur about the coin was wrong,
  But—"he hadn't proposed for gold!

"Could they possibly think that he'd behave
  To charming Adelaide Brown
Like a mercenary and heartless knave?
  He'd live such calumny down!

"He loved that girl with the fire of youth,
  And he'd go and just inform her
That, now he had learned the ridiculous truth,
  His love was only warmer."

He went, and he told her all his love,
  The calumny, and his pain;
And added, he'd heard that his aged Gov.
  Was anxious to see him again.

And he feared that duty must be done,
  And 'twas bitter, of course, to part;
But Adelaide Brown was never one
  To break a parent's heart.

He would go and stroke that parent's head,
  Though his own poor heart should crack,
And a month or two would soon be fled,
  And love would waft him back.

Young Jones he sailed, and Adelaide Brown
  No more of her Jones did hear;
For he spliced himself in a county town
  To a couple of thou. a year.

O spins., who list to a tale of love
  In these outlandish parts,
If your lover must go and see his Gov,
  Get married before he starts.

MY LETTER TO THE BEAK.

In days gone by, when law in Ind was not so nice as now,
And Beaks in their procedure would much latitude allow,
I sent my Kitmutgár once with a note unto the Beak :—
" Please give the bearer half a dozen lashes for his cheek."

" I waiting answer, sar? " said he. " Oh, yes." So off he set.
" Poor brute ! " thought I, " he little dreams the answer he will get."
I watched him down the road, and round the corner, out of sight;
I almost felt a twinge of pity.—Bah ! 't would serve him right.

An hour or more elapsed, and then it fairly made me stare
Amazed to see him coming back with quite a jaunty air.
" By Jove," I thought, " he likes it ! To his epidermis thick
A pleasing titillation is imparted by the stick."

He went about his duties, showing not a trace of pain;
I even thought he looked as if he'd give me sauce again.
"How can it be?" I asked myself. "He's not put out a bit.
Perhaps old Brown was absent, or he didn't read the chit."

At length my growing fidget I could keep no longer down;
I said, "Come, now, what answer did you get from Colonel Brown?"
"No answer, sar, at all!" said he. "Khansámah bringing that.
I giving chit Khansámah, sar." You might have knocked me flat!

"What? gave it the Khansámah? gracious Pow'rs!" "Yes, truly, sar,
I catch him going purchase rice and curry in bazaar.
I say, 'You take this letter—much time keeping, I afraid—
And master wanting me for making ready for parade.'"

He vanished, and I fell back overpowered in my chair.
This was indeed a highly cheerful turn in the affair!
My dear old fat Khansámah! they will strip thy creasy back;
For every year thou'st served me thou wilt only get a whack.

* * * * * *

He stood, the old Khansámah, like a bundle, in the door;
And then he crawled, and clasped my feet, and blubbered on the floor.
Behind him stood his mother, and his children, and his wife,
All screeching; and he said, "Now Sa'ib may freely take my life!

"I ruined man: I never face my people any more."—
He then exposed his back, and I could see that it was.... sore.
I raised him up, and said, "Khansámah, this is a mistake.
I trust rupees one hundred will some compensation make."

He rubbed his back, and looked at mother, children, wife; and said,
"I take rupee one hundred, sar, but never raise my head."
He took them. Ere the year was yet another fortnight old
His head was high as ever, and his turban sported gold.

The Kitmutgár, I subsequently learned, had once been sent
To Station Beak before, with note of similar content.
To get mine taken for him seemed the safer course to be:
The once was quite enough for him. And so it was for me.

THE LEGEND OF INDRA AND AHI.

No rain had fall'n for many a day,
  The land was sore athirst;
The mocking clouds swept overhead,
  Storm-charged, but never burst.
The people flocked about the temples,
  Praying Heaven for rain,
And cried, "Give rain, or else we die!"
  But all their cries were vain.

The harvest withered in the fields;
  Dust rose from every tank;

With carcasses of cattle all
  The arid country stank.
Last pestilence and famine strode
  In village and in town,
And struck, with hand remorseless,
  The wretched people down.

Then Indra rose, and girded on
  His sharp and flashing brand,
And said, "Behold, 'tis Ahi who
  Thus desolates the land!
The demon serpent Ahi, coiled
  In far celestial mount,
With dire and rain-constraining fold,
  About the water's fount.

"He hates the earth, and all thereon,
  And so he guards the rain.
No drop will ever fall on earth
  Till Ahi I have slain."
And all the people answered, "Go
  For thy dear country's sake,
And take thy brand, and save the land,
  And slay the demon snake."

So Indra drew his flashing brand,
  And Ahi's ruin vowed,
And hasted on his way to scale
  The demon-haunted cloud.
He journeyed to a mountain crest,
  Wrapped round with mist, and there

Stept forth upon the floor of space,
  And boldly trod the air.

'Twas sunset: cloudy range on range
  Like hills in heaven stood,
With purple base and golden peak,
  Against a sky of blood;
While darkly loured 'mid the rest,
  With thunder growling loud,
The snake-girt fount of waters in
  The demon-haunted cloud.

Now the darkness fell; earth vanished; cold
  The æther grew, and soon
Rose through the vapours far below
  The pale and ghastly moon.
And lo! o'erhead—as Indra peered—
  Lit by a straggling ray,
About the fount in monstrous folds
  The demon serpent lay.

Then upward still he journeyed on,
  With stealthy, painful toil.
And, ere the midnight, stood beside
  The beast's gigantic coil.
Huge throbs of life pulsated through
  The foul misshapen heap;
But unaware the creature lay,
  Plunged in a mighty sleep.

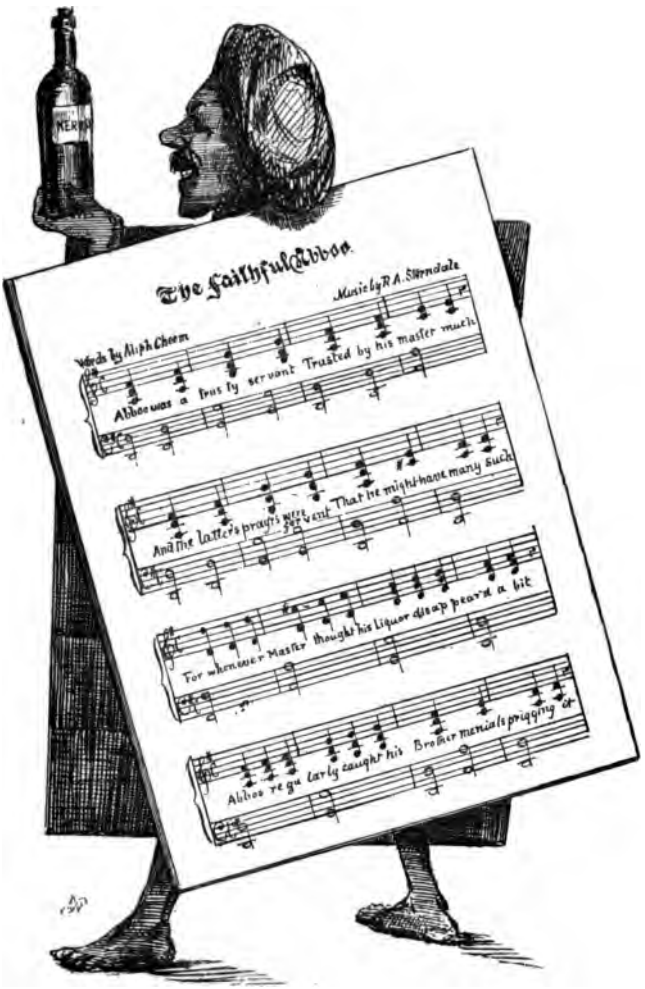
Then Indra poised his flashing brand,
  And, where the scaly skin
Uprose and fell above the heart,
  He drove it fiercely in.

The monster writhed, and gasped, and lashed,
  And, with a dying hiss,
Unclasped the pent-up front, and rolled
  Far into night's abyss.

Now surged the waters from their depths,
  The prisoned deluge burst,
And, pouring downwards, saved the land
  From its destroying thirst.
The springing verdure came again
  On hill, and plain, and mead;
And all the grateful people sang
  The praise of Indra's deed.

A demon serpent, Ignorance,
  In Ind still coils its fold
About the sacred fount of Truth,
  And doth the rain withhold.
The hearts of men are parched and faint,
  And Superstition dense,
With Bigotry, stalks blighting like
  A moral pestilence.

Anon, the sun of Progress, with
  His bright and flashing ray,
Will penetrate the clouds, and drive
  The demon snake away.
Then will Truth's pent-up waters pour
  Upon the soil amain;
And all the thirsty souls of men
  Drink up the blessed rain!



THE FAITHFUL ABBOO.

ABBOO was a trusty servant,
Trusted by his master much;

And the latter's prayers were fervent
  That he might have many such.

For whenever master thought his
  Liquor disappeared a bit,
Abboo regularly caught his
  Brother menials prigging it.

Always nailed some erring brother,
  Got him sent away, or fined;
Abboo would have nailed his mother—
  Abboo'd such an honest mind.

And his master, Colonel Jervis,
  Honoured Abboo, raised his pay;
Loved him for his faithful service,
  Hunting all the thieves away.

One by one they came and vanished,
  One by one they came to grief;
Maties, chockras, peons were banished;
  Still there always was a thief.

Mahlee, dhobie, cook, horsekeeper,
  Each were to the chokee sent;
Last of all the wretched sweeper—
  Still the Colonel's liquor went.

"Devilish odd this!" said the Colonel;
  "What a land to soldier in!
Abboo, this is most infernal—
  Who the blazes drinks my gin?"

"How I tell, sar? Plenty thieves, sar;
  Other servants bobbery pack,
Drinking up what master leave, sir,
  Moment Abboo turn his back.

"Abboo found out plenty rogue, sar,
  Stealing, 'busing master's name;
Master taking same-like logue, sar—
  What I doing?—plenty shame."

One fine night a dreadful yelling
  Roused the Colonel. By-and-bye,
Frightened servants ran in telling—
  "Abboo—belly paining—die!"

In the pantry, groaning, shouting,
  On the floor poor Abboo rolled;
And a bottle, past all doubting,
  Abboo's sad disaster told.

Many bottles, on the table,
  Odorous of gin were found;
But one bottle, with the label
  "Kerosine," lay on the ground.

In the hurry of the minute
  And the dark, he'd drained it clean.
Thinking master's gin was in it,
  Dreaming not of kerosine.

For a space in sircar service
  Abboo did his wits employ.
Never more will Colonel Jervis
  Trust another native boy.

THE HOLLOW TOOTH;

OR, AN ILL-ASSORTED UNION.

MR. COMMISSIONER ICEY CHILL
Possessed a youthful wife,
An unbending neck, an inflexible will,
And gloomy views of life.

The height of his pleasure consisted in
  Denouncing smiles and jokes,
And groaning and moaning over sin,
  Especially other folks'.

He sat one day in his office seat,
  With a frown upon his face;
And at eventide, when he came to eat,
  He sighed as he said the grace.

For hadn't his Ruth, so frivolous, been
  To the recent bachelors' ball,
In spite of his saying a ball was a scene
  He couldn't approve at all?

And hadn't a Mr. Harvey Sauce
  Called twice in the self-same week?
And wasn't it shocking? It was, of course.
  And wasn't he right to speak?

For didn't all bachelor army men
  Lead highly immoral lives?
And didn't they every now and then
  Steal other people's wives?

And hadn't he many a time with force
  Explained all this to Ruth?
And hadn't she said that Mr. Sauce
  Was quite an exceptional youth—

A gentleman quite, from tip to top,
  And as innocent as a mouse?
And hadn't he thought it wise to stop
  His frisking about the house?

And hadn't he her severely chid,
  And wasn't she underhand,
Talking away—yes, that she did—
  To the rascal at the Band?

And hadn't he laid before her bare
  The wickedness of her life,
And very solemnly told her where
  Her duty lay as a wife?

And didn't he say that her pranks must end,
  And her gadding about; but he
Would allow her to ask a serious friend,
  Or a clergyman in to tea?

And that, lest she'd be dull, he wished her soon
  To make a regular rule
Of teaching every afternoon
  In the neighbouring Mission School?

And didn't she fume and chafe and fret
  When he ventured thus to speak,
And work herself into an obstinate pet,
  Which lasted the rest of the week?

And didn't he patiently bear with her still,
  Reading her sermons nice,
And praying aloud that her evil will
  Might yield to his good advice?

And didn't he even show her how
  That hers was a fortunate lot?
And wasn't there then an awful row?
  And didn't he catch it hot?

And now he ate his dinner alone—
  For Ruth avoided the room—
He sighed as he picked his chicken bone,
  And his face was full of gloom.

For he couldn't and wouldn't to her give in,
  Nor compromise with wrong;
And he meant to be firm this time, and win,
  Though the struggle might be long.

* * * * *

It was, but woman, you know, is weak,
  And abhors protracted strife.
Ruth suddenly seemed to grow quite meek,
  And to change the way of her life.

No Harvey Sauce to be seen by her trap
  In the evening at the Band;
No novel at midday in her lap;
  No scented chit in her hand.

Propriety reigned in the bungalow
  From morning unto night,
And she didn't appear to find it slow,
  Though she very justly might.

Thought Chill to himself, "My duty's done—
  I've plucked out sin by the roots."
And over the victory that he'd won
  He rose an inch in his boots.

So time wore on, and exempt from blame,
  And quite at her ease seemed Ruth,

A TRUE REFORMER.

(Vide Tale 5th, Gooistan.)

A GANG of robbers stood before a King;
  A tender youth among the ruffian knot.
The monarch said, "The sword of justice bring,
    And execute the lot!"

Then knelt the Vizier down and kissed the throne,
  And prayed: "O world-illumer, spare the child!
With one whose facial herbage is not grown
    Be not so very riled.

"O Mecca of the world, recall thy ban:
  Give me the kid, to teach him what is right.
School, virtuous companions, and rattan
    Will soon reform him quite.

"Is it not writ, each new-born infant takes
  By natural bent to Islamism the true,
And only warp of education makes
    The Christian or the Jew?

"The power of education who can doubt?
The child, if left with thieves, of course would prig;
But careful training, sire, will bring about
A reformation big."

The monarch frowned, and answered, "Fool, go home!
The bad by nature ever will be bad.
Thou may'st as well throw balls upon a dome,
As educate the lad.

"What if, in quenching fire thy goods among,
Thou leav'st a little spark upon the grass?
To kill the mother snake, and spare the young,
Were worthy of an ass!"

Then bowed the Vizier low, and moaned, "Wah-wah!"
And all the courtiers joining, groaned, "Aie-aiē!"
Until the King roared, "Idiots that you are,
Take the young cad and try!"

The Vizier took the trembling little cad,
And caned him well, and taught him what was right,
And turned him out a well-conducted lad,
With manners most polite.

And all the courtiers said, "By Allah's grace,
And favour of the Mecca of the world,
The evil bent to good has yielded place;
Straight is the hair that curled!"

But grimly smiled the King behind his hand,
And said, "O foolish Vizier, vain thy love!
Thou canst not twist a rope that's made of sand.
Wolf's whelp yet wolf will prove!"

Two years had scarcely fled, when fresh dacoits
With rapine did the neighbourhood annoy,
And, lo! the wicked fame of their exploits
Struck fire within the boy.

With passion, that had slumbered, heaved his breast;
He slew the Vizier kind, and seized his goods,
And, like a hawk long stolen from its nest,
He hooked it to the woods.

The monarch, hearing, bit his noble hand,
And wept, "O Vizier, how thy schemes are floored!
How came it that thou couldst not understand
Bad iron makes bad sword?"

The moral of this tale it's hard to strike;
Perhaps, though, *this* a modern truth may touch:
Reform a jail-bird, if you can and like,
But, *don't expect too much.*

A CHRISTMAS REVERIE.

To-morrow, alas! I am booked to go
And dine with our Colonel and Mrs. C. O.
I hate to depart from my usual way;
And to-morrow, by Jove, will be Christmas Day!

One feels, now one hasn't a regular Mess,
It's a bore to go out, and a nuisance to dress;
And a feed at the Commandant's bungalow
Is a dreary attempt at Christmas, you know:

The punkah, instead of the Christmas fire!
The Colonel, instead of the dear old Squire!
The lizard, and withering noonday glow,
Instead of the robin, and frost and snow!

I know, after all, that my lot isn't bad,
But somehow or other it makes me sad,
At a season like this, when the thoughts *will* roam,
To think what they're doing just now at home!

I fancy I see them, the Squire and all,
In the breakfast-room in the dear old Hall.
There's snow on the drive and the grove of birch,
And they're ringing the chimes in the village church.

Yes, yonder he sits in his wonted place,
With a smile on his fresh benignant face;
And the Mother, she's there at the other end,
And Harry, and Jack, and Jane, and a friend.

I wonder whether they're altered much?—
The Dad's crisp hair had a silvery touch
When I said good-bye, and he bore up so;
And that—why, it's nearly ten years ago!

The Mother, too, she was tall and erect;
But she's stooping a little now, I expect,
And her hair, in its rich and glossy bands,
Has been fingered perhaps by Time's rough hands;

But it cannot alter her look so kind,—
It robs, but it leaves the heart behind;
And I see her beam happily round, in the way
That she always beamed upon Christmas Day.

There's Harry, who taught me fine escapades,—
He's got his Majority now in the Guards;
And they say that he's leading a steady life,
And thinking of looking about for a wife.

There's Jack,—why, I left him a rollicking lad,
And now he's a mate on an ironclad.
And Jane—a mere baby in frock and curl—
If her photograph's true, is a beautiful girl.

They're sitting all round the family spread:
There's a pasty of game, and a big boar's head;
There's holly on window and picture-frame,
And the fire burns up with a crackling flame.

Then the quiet old rector looks in on his way,
And bids them a blithesome Christmas Day;
And together they walk through the grove of birch,
Over the stile, to the village church.

At the graveyard gate the churchwardens stand,
With "A merry Christmas!" and hat in hand,—
The grocer, the smithie, and Farmer Ball,—
And the Squire has a kindly word for all.

Then, when the shadows of night descend,
The Hall is lighted from end to end;
There's a bonfire huge on the lawn outside,
And within, the Mother is in her pride,

For she loves this night the best of the year,
And loads her board with the Christmas cheer,—
The mincemeat pies, and the loin of beef,
And the grand plum-pudding with holly-leaf.

There's happiness, too, in the old Squire's face,
As he rises and says the Christmas grace.
He chuckles, and laughs, and cracks his joke,
And the party's a party of merry folk.

Then he fills a bumper up to the brim;
He toasts them all, and they all toast him.
"A merry Christmas and happy New Year
To every one who is near and dear!"

But I fancy the Mother's eyes are wet
When the old man says, "There is one toast yet—
Him absent—the youngster who's far away,—
God give him a merry Christmas Day!"

Ah me! I know that my lot's not bad,
But the reverie somehow makes me sad;
And this is a time when the thoughts *will* roam,
Wherever we are, to the scenes of home.

THE PAINTING OF THE STATUE.

A GLORIOUS fellow was Colonel McWine
Commanding the Hundred and Twelfth of the Line,
In the favourite Station of Kleekeepore—
So beloved by the corps,
That the Ensigns all swore,
If he wanted to borrow
A million to-morrow,

And had to provide,
By substantial security,
That the bill wouldn't slide
When it came to maturity,
There wasn't a subaltern wouldn't have stood for him.
But one terrible folly,
It must be admitted,
This Colonel so jolly
Not seldom committed,
Was this—he drank very much more than was good for him.

At dawn a light nip—
"But the veriest sip,
Just to moisten his lip,"
And by way of a warming—
The air was so chill while the regiment was forming!
And after parade, in the hot (and cold) weather,
Another to cool him and pull him together.
At breakfast some Rhenish, or quart of Bordeaux:—
"There's nothing so weakening as tea, sir, you know.
Why, by Gad, sir, it serves
To destroy all your nerves!"
And, after, a brandy-and-soda or so,
Towards noon, ere the sun
To its zenith could mount,
Perhaps two, perhaps one—
But then they didn't count.
At tiffin, beer, porter,
Or whisky-and-water;
And, later—he *did* get so dry after lunch—
A sherry or two, or a glass of milk punch,
Some bitters, of course, while he waited for Mess.
At dinner, a *magnum*, or more—never less.

But, gracious! all this was but skirmishing merely;
'Twas now that the action began, and severely.

A bottle of brandy
Was placed very handy,
With six soda-waters in line on the table.
There he'd sit in his glory,
Telling story on story,
Till list'ners grew scarce, and his mem'ry unstable.
Then rising unwillingly, shaking his noddle,
And vowing the bloods of the present day
Were made of brown paper, or very soft clay,
With the help of his bearer, to bed he would toddle.

And, curious to say,
He would rise the next day,
Ere the sun o'er the land shed his earliest ray;
On his face
Not a trace
Of the bout of the night,
And—after his nip—looking blooming and bright;
While the Majors would say to themselves, as he passed
Down inspecting the regiment, "How long will it last?"
And the youngsters would think, "What a wonderful head!
If we drank but a quarter *he* drinks, we'd be dead!"

But the doctors well knew
That this very fresh hue
Was the flag that drink waves
O'er the heads of its slaves,
And flaunts, till it leads them right over their graves.
And the Colonel too felt that, for all his hale look,
His heart fluttered sore, and his bridle-hand shook.

And at night, as oft restless and wakeful he lay,
A something would seem to his spirit to say—
A something half-like to a grim shadow beckoning—
"*Some* day, my friend, we must come to a reckoning!"

Time fled, and the Colonel became very grumpy;
He daily grew more and more shaky and jumpy;
Till a certain occurrence upset him most direly,
And gave him a turn which reformed him entirely.

Now, Kleekeepore is a place well known;
Climate quite of the temperate zone,
  Scarce harmful to health or to female beauty.
It boasts of a lovely public garden,

And ride,—well, *Mall*,—I beg its pardon,—
  And crowds of gents upon general duty.
    In fact, so pleasant it seems in their eyes,
    And each unemployed wallah so surely applies
      To be kindly allowed in that Station to stay,
      Doing his nothing, and drawing his pay,
      That it isn't the least hyberbolic to say
    It's a sort of field officer's Paradise.

A famous old Gen'ral once dwelt in the Station,
Whose mem'ry is held in extreme veneration;
        And so 'twas agreed
        'Twould be proper indeed,
Lest time should the sense of his merits efface
(And perhaps with a view to adorning the place),
To hoist him aloft, where he'd sit looking at you,
In the shape of a splendid equestrian statue.

The statue was reared, *having first been inspected,*
No doubt, as the *soldierly* statue expected;
Then covered up well, and with hoarding protected;
And a grand parade fixed, with great pomp to unveil it,
And with trumpets, and drums, and salutings, to hail it.
But, lo! on the eve of that glorious morn,
Unseen in the dark,—
By bad men, for a lark,—
Some pots full of paint to that statue were borne.
In the dead of the night,
When nobody knew,
They striped it with white,
Red, and also with blue;
Bedaubing, those sinners, that worthy old soul
With the colours you see on a barber's pole.
They also, to make the defacement more horrid,
Put Sammy marks three, very big, on his forehead;
Then putting the covering much as they found it,
And leaving no signs of marauding around it,
They slipped away safe, ere the red morning broke,
And the very clouds blushed that had witnessed the joke.
Loud sounded *reveillé,* and trumpet, and drumming
Announced to the world that the soldiers were coming.
The glittering troops were soon formed on parade,
And the sun flashed on bayonet, harness, and blade.
The ladies turned out in neat-habited throng,
On their silk-coated Arab steeds cantering along,
Or in carriage reposing,
And some of them dozing,
Drew up, with the "great unemployed," in the shade;
While as far as the eye
Could, unaided, descry,
Rose a dense mass of turbans, surmounting black faces,

Whose owners stood packed, or were fighting for places.
Old Colonel McWine
In full dress, very fine,
Proudly sate on his horse
At the head of his corps,
With his "jumps," rather worse
Than he'd felt them before;
For he'd boozed very late overnight at the Mess,
Only leaving in time to allow him to dress;
And he said to himself as he mounted, that morn—
"There's a screw out of order, as sure as I'm born.
I cannot make out what's the matter with me—
By Gad, one would think I was in for D. T.
If I'd liquored up lately, 'twere likely—bah! stuff!
It's mere weakness, I'm certain. I don't drink enough."
But he knew, poor old chap, that he did all the while,
And he tried, with such logic, his fears to beguile.

Well, the crisis was coming, the spectacle ready,
The ladies excited, the troops standing steady.
Save the surge of the crowd, not a sound could be heard:
The guns all unlimbered, awaiting the word.
It was given, and then as the ears were assailed
With the roar and the crash,
And the band's brazen clash,
The shroud was removed, and the statue unveiled!

There, on weird piebald steed, and ablaze in the sun,
All red, white, and blue sate the much-honoured one;
While the Staff looked dumbfounded and mute with surprise.
And the soldiers all giggled, and rubbed at their eyes,
And the crowd buzzed aloud, like a concourse of flies.

The jokers had won.
And considered it fun,
But the serious said 'twas atrociously done.
The hair of our friend,
Old McWine, stood on end.
He gave but one look
At the piebald erection;
Like an aspen-leaf shook,
And, in utter dejection,
With strange altered face,
As with brains in an addle,
Rode straight from the place,
Sitting limp in his saddle;
Low mutt'ring the while, through the rum-ti-tum-tumming,
"I knew it—I feared it—I felt it was coming!"

He heard not the hubbub that rose in his rear;
The growls of the thousands so horribly sold;
The big-wigs' "Confound it!" the ladies' "Oh, dear!"
Or the "Ah-bahs!" and "Allahs!" that *black* disgust told.

He heard not the parley that followed the diddle;
The deep execrations on those who'd projected it;
The useless surmises at solving the riddle—
"Whoever on earth were the rogues who effected it?"

He heard not the word to dismiss the parade, and
The sudden renewal of blowing and drumming.
He rode grimly on to the house where he stayed, and
Dismounted, low mumbling, "I knew it was coming."

His bearer approached, but he shirked the man's glance;
He walked to his room, like a man in a trance;

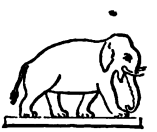
He cast off his uniform, crept into bed,
And pulled up the counterpane over his head;
Then, in voice so sepulchrally pitched, 'twould have shocked a
Less scene-hardened bearer, said, "Fetch me the doctor!"

The medico came in hot haste from the field,
And a comical sight to his gaze was revealed.
The Colonel rose up, like a ghost, whisp'ring, "See—
It has bagged me at last, doctor!" "What?" "Why—D. T.!

"The statue—the statue! Oh, Lord, it's too true!
It seemed to me speckled with red, white, and blue!"
Then he covered his head, and sank back as before,
And the doctor dropped into a side-splitting roar,
And laughed till his tears fell like rain on the floor.

"Oh, Colonel, forgive me; by Jove, it's too rare!
'Twas not an illusion that startled you there!
It wasn't a thing of your brain mocking at you!
'Twas simply—some larkers have painted the statue!"

McWine ultimately believed what he said,
But 'twas only when others had gravely assured him;
And the practical joke, which thus sent him to bed,
Roused some sober reflections, which happily cured him.



THE BISHOP AT SEA.

A STORY I've heard of a bishop out here,
  Who lived in the old, old day,
And, disliking the sea, more at home did appear
  On the see that don't end with an A.

Occasion he had a short voyage to make
  In the burst of the autumn monsoon,
With his truly soul-stirring discourse to awake
  The slumbering souls at Rangoon.

The sea it was rough, and the ship it did lurch,
  And it blew without reason or ruth;
And the consequence was this mainstay of the Church
  Suffered much for the sake of the truth.

The sea it grew rougher, the night it grew black,
  And the rain-drops fell heavy and thick,
And the Bishop he heartily wished himself back,
  And Rangoon—it might go to Old Nick!

He stumbled on deck, and the tempest descried:
  But, before he retired to his bed,
He took the bold skipper a moment aside,
  And thus to the skipper he said:

"O skipper, I really enjoy a good blow,
  And 'tis truly a glorious sight;
But your candid opinion I'm anxious to know,—
  Do you think there is danger to-night?"

The skipper he hitched himself up, and he laughed,
  Then he suddenly grew very grave,
As a hurricane squall seemed to stagger the craft,
  And she buried her nose in a wave.

And he said, "Well, your grace, it's a dirtyish night,
  But whether the vessel will ride,
I really can't tell you; we'll know before light:
  In Providence we must confide."

"Good gracious!" the Bishop exclaimed in dismay,
  As he clutched at his old shovel hat,
"This is terrible, skipper! you don't mean to say
  That really it has come to *that?*"

THE GENERAL DUTY COVE.

I KNEW a Major Biffin, who
  But rarely said a single word.
He looked as if he fed on rue,
        This melancholy bird!

One day we sat at tiffin, in
  A cool and cuscus-tattied room;
I said, "Remain not, Biffin, in
        Thy customary gloom.

"But cheer thee, Biffin, for a while—
  Unbosom all thy griefs." He strove,
And murmured, with a sickly smile,
  "General duty cove!"

"Ah! true," said I; "but, Biffin, that
  Means pay and nothing for to do,—
To wear sometimes a cockéd hat,
  And gaze at a review."

"Oh, friend!" said he; and as he spoke
  His lingual bonds seemed loosed; "I am
A walking military joke—
  A scarlet-coated sham!

"I do no work of any sort,
  Save seeing whether flowers will grow
In spite of weeds and spite of drought
  About my bungalow.

"They would not let me have a wing,
  Because my name trailed no H S;
They wouldn't give me anything
  But pay and idleness!

"They bundled me up-country quick,
  And stowed me in this Station hot,
Where God knows whether I shall stick
  Or whether I shall not!

"I count the slow revolving suns,
  I reckon night succeeding night,
I count the distant booming guns
  They fire at some sham fight;

"I count each month the bright rupees
My butler brings me in a bag—
Some day I'll purchase, if you please,
Your inexpensive nag.

"I count the strong memorials I
Have forwarded, and got returned—
There, in that bullock-trunk, they lie—
A goodish lot I've burned,

"I count the grey hairs on my pate,
Which gradually creep up higher;
I count the years I'll have to wait
Before I can retire.

"I count the pension I shall get—
Eleven hundred pounds a year,—
Good wage for lounging, that, and yet
I do as little here.

"I sicken at the prospect, though,—
The future looks so flat and blank.
I wish to God that I could go
On pension of my rank!

"The field is closed—the door is shut—
In indolence I'm growing faint.
I know the right stuff's in me, but
They seem to think it ain't!

"Well, well—I'll draw my monthly pay—
The sound o' siller's some relief.
Now, like a good man, go away,
And leave me to my grief!"

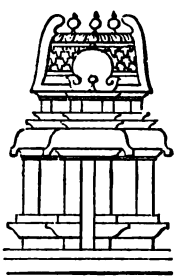
I rose,—but ere I lifted up
  The cuscus tatty at the door,
Of b.-and-s. a parting sup
        I claimed, and then some more;

And as the last I slowly quaffed,
  I said, "Good-bye—shake off this onus.
Is there *no* cure?" He grimly laughed,
        And muttering, answered, "Bonus!"

TO A GRIFFIN.

So YOU'RE bound for the country of curry and rice, sir?
Well, take on one point an old stager's advice, sir!
Just purge from your mind every English-formed notion
Of Ind, ere you get to the Indian Ocean.
The English are people—what thinker can doubt it?—
Who know and who care very little about it.
Just look at the way Members, even the best, shun,
In Lords or in Commons, an Indian Question.
They're bound, once a year, to look into the budget;
They spare it one sitting, and most of them grudge it;
But talk about opening a park or a gutter,
The benches are crowded, and all in a flutter.
M.P.s, as you know, are our ablest and best!!!
So what do you think we can say of the rest?
Why, there's hardly a schoolboy to whom Indian history,
Bar a few facts, isn't next to a mystery.
There's scarcely a man, if you ask unexpectedly,
Can tell how it's governed at present, connectedly.
You've heard the old jokes about truculent dhoolies,
The wild tribe of Hadjees, and ice-machine coolies,
Of paddy-fields, meaning an Irish location?
They're samples of what is believed by the nation.

It wouldn't surprise me to hear that they've told yer
You'll live like a prince on your pay as a soldier;
A sub—and you'll save something under a million.
Ah me! what a pity you're not a civilian.
It wouldn't surprise me to find you believing
That magnates still spend half their coin in receiving;
Keep house in a style of Nabob prodigality,
And rival each other's profuse hospitality.
I'd venture a wager you think every native
Is either a toady or blood-thirsty caitiff;
Uncov'nanted-wallahs some shady profession,
And Ind for Bengal but another expression;
That cobras are found every day in your slippers;
That horses are cheap, and all Arabs are clippers;
That life in a Station's all romping and riot,
And curry and rice is your principal diet;
That missionary hardships would move you to pity;
That tigers are common, and ayahs are pretty;
That sweet English girls, by the P. and O. carried
By hundreds, are no sooner landed than married;
Et cæt'ra, et cæt'ra—all rank fal-the-lal, sir:
Just drop such ideas in the Suez Canal, sir!



TEETH, TEETH, TEETH!

AMONG the many ills white flesh is prey to,
  In India's hot and enervating plains—
Mosquito's angry buzz by night and day too,
  The wingéd ants begotten of the rains,
The crescent-tailéd scorpion in your slippers,
  The deadly cobra and the carpet-snake,
The hornéd beetle with its horrid nippers,
  The punkah-pullers who *won't* keep awake,
The tom-tom and the servants' loud contention—
  Are bad enough, but oh! there's worse to mention.

You may be proud and pucka in position,
  Collector, or a General of Brigade,—
Your funds may be in flourishing condition,
  You ne'er may have to seek the sowcar's aid—
You may divert your mind with much shikarring,
  Or serve nigh half your service on the hills,—
You may not know an inconvenience, barring
  Th' already mentioned necessary ills;
God save you, then, from what *I've* known, forsooth—
  No dentist, and an agonizing tooth!

THE TWO MACBETHS.

'Tis sweet, I think 'tis said in more
  Than one poetic book,
To see men turn from fields of gore
  To ply the reaping-hook.

'Tis also sweet when soldiers brave
  Doff regulation swords,
And, corked and rouged, sublimely rave
  Upon the Station boards.

The only drawback seems to be
  This well-established fact,
That every amateur thinks he,
  And he alone, can act.

And so it often comes to pass
  That things go all awry,
And what should only be a farce
  Becomes a tragedy.

Now Major Swill and Doctor Pill
  Were rivals on the stage,
And played with histrionic skill
  Beyond the average.

But—so I'm told 't has ever been
  With actors small and great—
They hated one another, e'en
  With diabolic hate.

No stage committee's wheedling way,
  No managerial art,
Could make them e'er together play,
  Or take a minor part.

If Doctor Pill played *Romeo*,
  Would Swill take *Friar Laurence?*
No—Pill be jiggered—not for Joe—
  The part was his abhorrence.

"With *Box* by Swill and *Cox* by Pill
  The cast would be so good."
Those vulgar farces made him ill—
  Pill didn't think he could.

One day the corps dramatic tried
  To settle on a play,
But failed the question to decide
  In any sort of way.

At last said Major Swill, "I vote
  For *Macbeth!* What's the odds?"
At which a few the table smote,
  And cried aloud, "Ye gods!"

A member mildly said he thought
  The heavy tragic line
Was one where—so experience taught—
  Few amateurs could shine.

The manager protested too;
  He knew as much as most,
But wondered how they meant to do
  The working of the *Ghost.*

But most approved the bright idea,
  And squashed the sceptic few,
And proved with logic very clear
  'Twas not so hard to do.

Then Doctor Pill upraised his voice
  In accents of contempt,
And said, "Well, gentlemen, your choice
  Beats all I could have dreamt.

"Will Major Swill now really deign
  As *Macbeth* to appear?"
When next he favours us again,
  Perhaps he'll do *King Lear.*"

Swill put his eye-glass to his eye,
  And gave his foe a stare;
And said, "I can conjecture why,
  But Pill is scarcely fair.

"Why shouldn't others have their fling,
  When he such credit got
By his delicious rendering—
  Ha! ha!—of *Claude Melnotte?*"

Now Pill felt gall within his soul:
  This was a master-stroke;
For Pill in that romantic *rôle*
  Had been a Station joke.

And matters looked a little queer,
  And tended to a row,
When someone rose and said, "Look here,
  I think I've hit it now.

"Let's have *Macbeth*—'twill take, no doubt,
  Though 'tis a boldish start;
And Swill and Pill can, night about,
  Perform the leading part.

"Toss up for nights—there—that's your line—
  It's very often done.
Thus both the stars will have their shine,
  And we shall have our fun."

This sage proposal threw a gloss
  Of concord on the scene;
Swill said he would be glad to toss,
  And Pill was quite as keen.

They tossed for nights. The Major won,
  And chose the opening night;
And all agreed that what was done
  Was very fair and right.

The bill was drawn—"the season starts
  With *Macbeth*—only twice,"
Et cætera: and then the parts
  Were settled in a trice.

King Duncan Pat O'Flynn would take—
  "He'd throy it shure enough;"
And Corporal MacBean would make
    A natural *Macduff*.

Brown, Jones, and Robinson would get
  Up as the Scottish host;
Biggs (Staff Corps, unemployed) was set
  To represent the *Ghost.*

The *Witches* would, 'twas understood,
  Be cast some future day;
And Spinks, a new-fledged Ensign, would
  The *Lady Mac* portray.

The night came on, and Major Swill
  Was glorious as *Macbeth,*
That dagger scene—it haunts me still,
  And takes away my breath!

Some people said the audience jeered,
  But that was clearly spite;
For Major Swill declared they cheered;
  I did with all my might.

The only thing that made him go
  Behind the scenes, and swear,
Was Pill, who from the stalls below
  Looked up with stony stare.

"That stony stare, my Pill," he said,
  "Will bring you grief and sorrow;"
And wicked thoughts came in his head
  With reference to the morrow.

The *Lady Mac*—that's Spinks, you know—
  Was rather fond of wine.
Said Swill unto himself, "Ho! ho!
  I'll ask young Spinks to dine."

He came, and Swill did never think
  Of shame, remorse, or funk,
But basely made the *Lady* drink
  Away till she was drunk.

Then drove her round in time to meet
  The prompter's final call;
And entering, calmly took his seat
  In Pill's abandoned stall.

The curtain rose;—but why prolong
  This history of spleen?
Pill really came out very strong
  Till—Spinks came on the scene.

A lurch—a hiccup—more—and then
  Pill saw the cruel sell;
And Swill he whistled softly when
  Spinks *and* the curtain fell.

This was the last attempt they made
  At Shakespeare in that corps;
And Messrs. Swill and Pill ne'er played
  Alternate any more.

Indeed 'twas darkly given out
  That, reconcilement scorning,
They had an unsuccessful bout
  At pistol-shots one morning.

THE SUSPICIOUS JUDGE;

OR, THE GEHENNA OF MISTRUST.

CHIEF JUSTICE SIR CRANBURY TART
  Had expended the cream of his life,
When he gave his acquaintance a start
  By espousing a juvenile wife.

Little Margaret—that was her name—
  Was an innocent flirt, by the way;
And encouraged the innocent flame
  Of innocent Mr. du Lait.

The Judge was, by common report,
  As superior a Judge as you'd find;
He would see through a wall in his Court,
  But at home was no judge of mankind.

For this innocent Mr. du Lait
  He eyed with suspicious regard;
And he put, when he left for the day,
  An intelligent bearer on guard,

Who ought to have proved to the Judge,
  By reporting each eve "sub burrabur,"
That 'twas simply ridiculous fudge
  Such degrading suspicions to harbour.

"Well, Ramsammy, what have you seen?
  Any news about Mr. du Lait?"
"No single one gentleman's been;
  Missis sleeping the most of the day."

And a similar answer was given
  By Ramsammy week after week,
Till at last the Chief Justice was driven
  To look on himself as a sneak.

Which opinion he held for a space,
  Till he learned, to his horror, one day,
That the bearer was tired of his place,
  And was going to Mr. du Lait;

And that Mr. du Lait was to start,
  In a sudden *tourbillon* of bustle,
For a place very deep in the heart
  Of the solitudes of the Mofussil.

Oh, what slender occurrences lead
  To a world of suspicion and pain!
For distrust there was *really* no need;
  But he never was happy again!

What more natural thing for a nigger
  Than leaving old master for new,
Especially seeing the figger
  Of wage was superior too?

And it seems very hard that a gent
  Of repute such as Mr. du Lait,
Can't on duty be suddenly sent
  Without being a "*vilain suspect*."

O Elders! your hell has begun,
  If at sixty you marry with youth,
And can't be persuaded that fun
  May be coupled with virtue and truth!

THE QUESTION OF THE DAY.

Is the wild rumour true? Is the deep-scheming Russ
Meditating a final extinction of us?

Does he dream, as he toils o'er the Mid-Asian sands,
That each "steppe" brings him nearer to these sunny lands,
Only waiting to fall, like a plum, to his hands?

Is he fired by the will of old Peter the rough?
Are his fatherland's acres not ample enough?
Does his mouth water greatly for our curry stuff?

Is he proud of weak Khiva's loud-sung overthrow?
Will our steel-tipped walls fall when his trumpets shall blow?
Does he think Hindostan is a new Jericho?

Does he hope that the Sikh, if his legions e'er halt
'Neath the Khyber, will prove renegade to his salt?—
Then his Mutiny-reading is strangely at fault.

Does he trust that our Princes, who rule their own lands,
Will unite common cause with his hungering bands?—
Ask the Khivan how high Russian honesty stands!

Let him come! let him try! let him work out his plan;
Let him manage to wriggle through Affghanistan,
And debouch on the Gilead below—if he can!

Let him shout that the conqu'ror of Khiva has come,
With the Affghans, arrayed to the sound of his drum,
To help him to eat this nice Indian plum!

He will learn that, perhaps, the keen steel of the Sikh
In a different tongue from the Khivan's can speak,
And will battle with his, any day of the week.

He will find too, maybe, that the race of the men
Who faced him at Inkermann, two to ten,
Will face him and beat him again and again!

What need we fear in the threatened fight,
When the Russ will come down in his boasted might?
We might fear, if, with us, he could boast of his *right.*

We might blench, if we knew that we undertrod
The souls that we rule by the will of God:—
If we ruled o'er the land with a *Russian* rod.

We might forfeit that land, if we ground it as stone,
Not ranking its millions of men as our own,
As flesh of our flesh, and as bone of our bone;

Not raising the hearts of its sons from the dust,
Not wielding our sway as a sacred trust,
Nor forswearing the past with its greed and its lust,—

Not holding fair scales to the white and the black,
Nor sowing our love in the famine's track;—
Then foes, not lieges, might be at our back!

No! deep-scheming Russ! ere our vineyard you wrest,
Make your own Asian herdsmen a little more blest;
Make your own subject-peoples feel ruled, not oppressed!

Teach your Khivans to know you are just as you're strong,
Your Bokharans to feel no deep smouldering wrong—
Or around your own rearguard avengers may throng.

Teach the Mid-Asian world to accept its new lord—
Not new barbaric chief to the old savage horde,
But a power bringing culture as well as the sword.

We are ready to greet you if this be your aim,
If the end of your conquest and ours be the same;
We can speak for our conquests, then, both, without shame.

We are ready to hail you as friends in the East,
Each fulfilling its mission as Progress's priest,
Rousing nations to life whose life-pulses have ceased.

But if other than this be your motive, stand back!
If your mind is on conquest, and ruin, and rack,
We have swords in our hands, and our arms are not slack.

If this preaching benevolence prove a mere cloak,
This raising dead Asia a grim Russian joke,
Come on! Dash yourselves 'gainst the old hearts of oak!

To the great God of Battles the issue we trust,
And, if victory sets to the fearless and just,
Your proud-soaring eagles will trail in the dust!

THE DESERTED BUNGALOW.

(The following is substantially true.)

THERE stands on the isle of Seringapatam,
By the Cauvery, eddying fast,
A bungalow lonely,
And tenanted only
By memories of the past.
It has stood, as though under a curse or spell,
Untouched since the year that Tippoo fell.

The garden about it is tangled and wild,
Sad trees sigh close to its eaves,
And the dark lithe shapes
Of chattering apes
Swing in and out of the leaves;
And when night's dank vapours rise grey and foul,
The silence is rent by the shrill screech-owl.

The windows are shuttered, the doors are shut,
And the odour and stain of decay
Is on plaster and beam,
And the stone steps seem
To be ooze-corroding away;
And the air all around is as tinged with the breath
Of the felt, though invisible, presence of Death.

Twas a pleasant abode, no doubt, in its prime;
Two storeyed, facing the tide;
A verandah deep,
And a broad stone sweep
Of steps to the riverside,
And a boat-house, close to the water's edge,
Flanking the stairs, on a rocky ledge.

The stream flows by in a low-banked curve,
And higher up, to the right,
Are the battlements grey
That could not stay
The rush of old England's might;
And, higher up still, the world-famed breach—
A lesson we to posterity teach.

Stirring the times were those times, forsooth,
And bold the hearts of our men,
Who plunged through water,
And rocks and slaughter,
And carried the tiger's den.
Heroic the onset and crushing the blow
That was struck near this lonely bungalow.

When the siege was over a Colonel dwelt
With his wife and daughters here,
In command of the fort
Where the bloody sport
Had cost Mysore so dear.
I can fancy the girls with their prattle light,
And the house all trim, and the garden bright;

And the merry party afoot on the steps,
Looking across the stream,
Or swinging afloat
In their pleasure boat,
Under the soft moonbeam,
With the cool breeze over the water blowing,
Making amends for the midday glowing.

I think I can see in the early morn
The horses held at the door,
And the girls riding out
With the Colonel stout
To visit the breach once more,
Or gaze at the gate where Tippoo fell,
Stabbed to death in the fierce pell-mell.

And then the breakfast after the ride,
Under the shadowy trees,
Mamma in her chair,
And the homely fare,
And the Colonel at his ease,
Conning the sheets of the night-brought post,
Between attacks on the tea and toast.

And, after, the long yet happy day
In the cuscus-tattied gloom,
The cheery tiffin,
And giggling griffin
'Sconced in the drawing-room;
And the voice of the grand piano, half
Hushing the man's and maiden's laugh.

And hushed they were; for one dreadful eve
The Cholera tapped at the door;
Nor knocked in vain,
For mother and twain
Answered the summons sore.
When dawn broke over the house next day,
The mother and daughters had passed away.

The Colonel buried his loved ones three,
Then fled from the house of woe.
And ne'er since then
Have the feet of men
Trod in that bungalow,
Save feet of the traveller, passing near,
Who turns to see it, and drops a tear.

The mouldering rooms are now as they stood
Near eighty years ago:
The piano is there,
And table and chair,
And the carpet, rotting slow,
And the beds whereon the corpses lay,
And the curtains half time-mawed away.

A type of gloom and decay and death,
And happiness overcast,
Is this bungalow lonely,
And tenanted only
By memories of the past.
Peace to the shades of the three who died
In that lonely house by the Cauvery's tide!

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

On the hills they call Neilgherries,
Where they grow the coffee-berries,
And the climate's just a mean between the torrid and the cold,
There exists a race of niggers,
Of extraordinary figgers,
And of habits so peculiar, that their story *must* be told.

Their secluded habitations
Are but simple excavations,
With a cover like a kennel, or the section of a tub.
Their apparel very odd is—
Just a blanket on their bodies,
And the milk of cattle constitutes their only sort of grub.

They a very ancient race are,
Yellow-coloured in the face are,
And "Toda" is the name by which the family is known;
They are not at all offensive,
Save to noses apprehensive,
And the only thing they ask is, that they may be let alone.

Their women are enormous,
And, as they themselves inform us,
Are in matrimonial matters quite the wonder of the sex:
Polyandrist is each lady,
And she doesn't think it shady—
To have half a dozen husbands is a *usitata lex.*

We may think the custom curious,
And socially injurious,
And call upon the State to such a sin to put a stop:
Holding those who do the habit
On a level with the rabbit,
And deserving what the rabbit gets when caught upon the hop.

But is it more immoral,
If the husbands do not quarrel,
Than to keep a lot of spouses, like the Mormon or the Turk?
'Tis a very funny question,
Which I give as a suggestion
To those people who so nobly for the rights of woman work.

AN OMISSION.

Oh, there's nothing in Ind half so sweet as a plunge
In a jolly big tub, with a jolly big sponge!
Lord Byron of sweets most enchantingly sings,
And mentions all manner of saccharine things,
Running all through the list in most masterly fashion,
From gondolier's songs to the first thrills of passion;
And though many others, nigh thirty, approving,
Declares, to his mind there is nothing like loving.
Tom Moore also wrote something gushing and neat
About Love's young dream being awfully sweet;
And most of the poets have rhymed about what,
In their private opinion, 's delicious or not;
But none, though they certainly haven't abused it,
Have lauded the tub. Let us hope that they used it.

O ye who are serving your country in Ind,
And know what is meant by a hot-weather wind;
Who've melted from morning to evening, and wondered
You lived, with thermometer marking a hundred;
Who've tossed about fretting, and scolding all night
Punkah-wallahs who snooze and mosquitoes who bite;
Who've risen at morn unrefreshed from your bed,
With a horrible temper and terrible head,
A craving for liquor, a loathing for grub,—
Ye know what delight's in a good roomy tub!

"GOD SPEED THE PRINCE OF WALES."

An Ode of Welcome.

Ho! land of Ind, arouse thyself,
  And loud thy praises be,
That England's heir, thy future lord,
  Is coming o'er the sea.
Great Englishmen have sought thy shores,
  But none so great as he.

Flash brightly out, thou gem of East,
  And hail thy royal guest,
Who comes to closer bind the bonds
  That knit thee to the West;
The bonds of peace and justice,
  Not chains of the oppressed.

No sword-girt tyrant hastes to thee,
  To bruise or smite thee down;
No Muscovite in search of Eastern
  Jewels for his crown;
But Prince with heart wide ope to thee,
  And face that wears no frown.

No cries for vengeance from a nation
  Outraged come with him;
No thirstings for dominion new,
  No threats, no bodings grim—
He toasts thee with a cup of goodwill
  Flowing to the brim.

Then, land of Ind, arouse thyself
  And cast before his feet
Thy offering of affection,
  And the homage that is meet,
And Friend and Friendship's Emblem,
  As well as Emperor greet.

Let all the dusky millions
  In field and thronged bazaar,
Thy loyal native Princes
  In the glittering Durbar,
Acclaim the Prince, who comes to gaze
  On India's rising star.

And let the mimic clash of arms
  The warrior's welcome speak,
And tent-spread plain exhibit no
  Confederation weak,
Of stalwart Briton linked with Hindoo,
  Mussulman, and Sikh.

From hill-bound east to sea-girt west,
  Steep north to blazing south,
From central sweeps of plenty,
  And regions saved from drouth,
Let hearty acclamation ring
  From one accordant mouth!

Then pray no European storms,
  Or Eastern ocean gales,
Arrest the weighing anchor,
  Or stay his spreading sails;
And let him catch upon the breeze
  "God speed the Prince of Wales!"

MAY AND DECEMBER.

THEY were wed at Murree,
All in a hurry—
I saw it done in the church.
I did not call
Them a match at all,
Colonel and Mrs. Birch.

She was slim, *petite*,
And her smile was sweet,
But it seemed a joyless smile:
Such as saint might make
When tied to the stake,
Or Suttee mounting the pile.

She must have been
Just seventeen;
She looked scarce more than a child.
Afraid she seemed,
But her mother beamed,
And then the poor thing smiled.

She gasped each word,—
It was hardly heard,
Though she strove with her might and main;
Her father's glance
Caught hers askance,
And so she smiled again.

The husband was red,
With a bullet head,
And a weather-beaten skin;
His years threescore,
Or a trifle more,
And he had a double chin.

A stern, hard man,
Did you rightly scan
The cast of his upper lip;
Who wouldn't laugh
If you dared to chaff
Concerning the wedding trip.

He was rich, they say,
Drew handsome pay—
Three years, and he could retire.
The parents bade,
And the little maid
Meekly walked to the fire.

He was old and stout,
All that—no doubt.
They knew it as well as we.
But they closed their eyes,
And they bagged their prize,—
What a son-in-law he would be!

And where was the use
Of her being a goose?
He'd a good account at the bank.
Why should they care
If he'd little hair,
As long as he gave her rank?

Wouldn't she sit,
She—little chit—
Even her mother above?
Why should they ask her,
Why should they task her
About such a thing as love?

Love? Never mind.
Of course he'd be kind,
Give her a home and carriage,
Dresses no end,
Money to spend;
Those the essentials of marriage!

That's what they thought,
That's what they taught,
Meaning her happiness too.
People world-hardened
Don't ask to be pardoned
For taking this practical view.

And so, as I said,
The couple were wed,
And left for their wedding tour;
And when they returned,
I think she had learned
What is meant by the word "endure."

There were dinners, of course,
And the folk, in force,
Were asked to honour the bride.
It tried her rather;
But mother and father
Were happy and full of pride.

She took her place,
With a modest grace,
And smiled when a friend addressed her;
But else, sat quiet,
As though the riot
And chatter around oppressed her.

When asked to play,
She would softly say,
"She was nervous—could not do it;"
When others played,
A weariness weighed
On her face, as she listened to it.

And oft in her eyes
The moisture would rise,
And a sigh escape her breast.
I saw it clearly,
I noticed her nearly,
More narrowly than the rest.

And I, at a dinner,
Remarked she was thinner,
And the roses gone from her cheeks.
Poor child, I thought,
What a change is wrought
In the matter of five short weeks!

Then, after the first
And orthodox burst
Of pleasures arranged for her,
She kept to her house,
As still as a mouse,—
A heart-broke prisoner.

Whenever I called,
The husband bald
Was certain to sit me out.
I'd have liked, I own,
To see her alone;
Few gentlemen did, I doubt.

For he stood on his guard,
And the cage was well barred,
And no hawks came to flutter the dove;
And the wife did her best
To obey his behest,
And rendered him all but her love.

Some women are strong,
And can suffer long,
And a numbness at last succeeds;
Or, senseless to passion,
They live for fashion,
And dress supplies their needs.

But others are weak,
And foolishly meek—
Don't last to the callous stage.
They yearn and they pine,
And a grief enshrine
That externals cannot assuage.

So my sweet friend drooped,
In her prison cooped,
Though she never a murmur gave;
And I saw she was drifting,
Beyond uplifting,
Silently into the grave.

They saw she was ill.
"A fever—a chill—
She needed change, to be sure."
A chill in truth!
Heart-chill, forsooth,
Is a nasty disease to cure.

They sent her away
On an early day,
The mother installed in charge.
She said "good bye"—
Poor girl! and I . . . .
Well, the lump in my throat was large.

They duly sailed,
But the sea-breeze failed
To blow the chill from her breast.
When she went ashore,
'Twas a corpse they bore,
And the girl-wife is at rest.

CAPTAIN SPRINT'S WAGER.

At Scorcheepore the heat is always something to be felt;
Its social ice the only thing that's never known to melt:
The people there, perhaps in order *somehow* cool to be,
Are cool to one another in a singular degree.

Of all its icy people, though, the iciest I met
Were Martin Brett, Collector, and his wife, Matilda Brett.
To freeze all other people seemed the object of his life;
To aid him in his freezing the main object of his wife.

Now, once a year these worthies asked the Station to a feed,
Whereat the welcome, like the wine, was very iced indeed.
The guests were chill, the host and hostess frigid as the Fates;
It was, in fact, a cold collation, even to the plates.

From one of these quite recently, a certain Captain Sprint
To "stay away," as he would say, received a lucid hint;
That is, alone of all his set, he got no invite card,
And all the tongues were asking why poor Captain Sprint was
barred.

Perhaps it was he'd never deigned to pay Matilda court,
Perhaps they'd heard that he had said "he couldn't stand their sort."
He *had* this observation made, and friends will often take
Such observations to the parties meant, for friendship's sake.

Besides, he was a cheery youth brim full of pranks and fun,
And Scorcheepore was rather sore at things that he had done;
His jolly laugh, his playful chaff, were not much valued there:
To chaff a live Collector is a serious affair.

"Halloa, my boy," his Colonel said, "what's this they're saying now?
Not asked to Brett's? An insult to the race of Sprint, I vow."
"No, Colonel,—I'm not asked, but I'll be there, sir, I'll be bound."
"Not you, my boy!" "I will, sir. Come, I'll lay you twenty pound."

"I'll book it," said the Colonel. "How you'll do it, I can't see;
The feed's to-morrow evening and——" Said Sprint, "Leave that to me.
I'm going to the dinner, though as yet I've no invite,
And you will hand me over twenty pounds to-morrow night."

The morrow came. Full grew the spacious rooms of Madam Brett.
The Colonel, entering, scanned the guests, but no,—no Sprint as yet;
And when the "rankest" dame was led to dinner by the host,
He thought "That silly bet of Sprint's was just a bit of boast."

They sat: each paired correctly with a mate of fitting rank;
A few, of course, dissatisfied, and looking very blank.
There never was a "burra khana" given yet in Ind
Where *some* at the arrangement of the pairs were not chagrined.

The grace. A silence, very long. Then talking in low tone,
Disjointed, dropping, fitful; everybody grim as stone.
The servants, in a row, behind each Sa'ib's or lady's back,
Like wall of white surmounted by a coping-stone of black.

Behind the Colonel's chair there stood one, taller than the rest,
With long white coat and turban, and arms folded on his breast.
He placed the Colonel's soup before him when the feed began,
Which made the Colonel say, "Halloa, wherever is my man?"

"No servant come for Sa'ib to-night."——"Ha! absent. Drunk, no doubt!
By Gad, to-morrow, sure as eggs is eggs. I'll kick him out."—
"Pray 'scuse me, Sa'ib; he drunken fellow; bringing caste disgrace.
I told to serving Sa'ib this evening. I belong this place."

"Ha! one of Brett's, of course. A civil sort of fellow. Stop!
Confound you, don't remove my soup before I've had a drop!"
Then to his fair next neighbour, "Pardon, ma'am: that nincompoop
Was on the point of spiriting away my plate of soup."

"Please, master, 'scuse me: plenty quick they serving courses here.
'Fore master eat his soup they bringing fishes round, I fear.
Two fishes coming—one ee pomfret, other tankey sort."
With that he calmly filled the Colonel's wine-glass up with *port*.

"Halloa, what's this?" "Please, master, 'scuse me if I doing wrong.
Collector always saying colonel's liking something strong."
"Some sherry, fool!" "I fetching master brandy if he like."
—The Colonel muttered something, and he looked inclined to strike.

The Colonel took some pomfret when came round the fishy course:
The fellow promptly over it spooned out some apple sauce.
"Take this away!" the Colonel roared. "Yes, sar! Please, master, 'scuse.
If master only try, with fish this proper sauce to use."

"By Gad!" the Colonel muttered, "Brett is playing me some goak!
Bad form of him, by Jingo! and a bit beyond a joke.
I didn't think 'twas in him. I'll be even with him, though;
Some day, by Gad! I'll take occasion just to let him know."

The *entrées* journeyed safely through. He got some salmi fair,
Though on the middle of his plate he found a long black hair.
Such things, however, now and then are fated to appear;
And into his champagne the stupid fellow poured some beer.

"Take this away!" the Colonel said, as to his doom resigned.
"Now, go and get a slice of mutton, and some jelly, mind."
It came. The Colonel choked and coughed, and uttered a loud "damn!"
The meat was good. The jelly in his mouth was strawberry jam!

All eyes upon the Colonel. Brett much shocked, indignant too,
Apologies, but awkwardness the rest of dinner through;
No further *contretemps* overt, except a tilt of cream
All down the Colonel's neck, and on his jacket, in a stream.

The dinner done, the Colonel said, "Brett, sorry I can't stay."
"Oh, come and hear some music." "Many thanks, but not to-day."
He strode all savage down the hall, dashed on his forage cap,
And shouting, "Bring my buggy!" waited fuming for his trap.

It came; and perched upon it sat the waiter at the feed.
The Colonel said, "By heav'ns, but this is impudence, indeed!
Get out, you brute, or I'll get up and break your dirty head!"
"Please, master 'scuse me, master drive me home," the fellow said.

"I do my best for master here: I wait him dinner-time;
I making some mistake for master,—surely that no crime.
If I offending master, I jump down and lick the ground;
But master *lose his bet to me*, and *hand me twenty pound!*"

ARABELLA GREEN.

OR, THE MERCENARY SPIN.

I'M going now to rhyme about
  A most unhappy spin.,
Whose crime was being too devout
  A worshipper of tin.

We'll, firstly, drop a silent tear
  On her untoward fate,
And, secondly, on her career
  Regretfully dilate.

Her name was Arabella Green;
  A Colonel was her Pa;
She was the sole pledge that had been
  Presented by her Ma.

At six she went to England;—that,
  You know, is quite the rule;—
And there her mother left her at
  A Brighton boarding-school.

There she acquired what's often taught
  To girls who hope to charm—
More grace of carriage than of thought;
  It pays, so where's the harm?

She sang (they say in tune), could dance,
  Spent much on dress and scents,
Spoke French,—well, Brighton isn't France,—
  Forgot her parents;

Did all a girl should do, in fact,
  Her studies to complete,
Or, what's more practical, attract
  A husband to her feet.

Sometimes her aunties called, and took
  Her walking on the Steyne.
But home was an unopened book
  To Arabella Green.

"She's quite a woman," cried her Dad,
  (He'd got her photograph):
"We'll have her out, we will, by Gad!—
  She's fifteen and a half."

So Mrs. Green went home to bring
  Sweet Arabella out,
And found the darling little thing
  Knew what she was about;

For on the voyage, when she told
  Her what should be her game,
The artless creature did unfold
  Opinions much the same.

She had, of course, a deal to learn
  In matter of details,
But—she had such a business turn—
  Soon rattled through the scales.

The pair upon the poop would sit,
  And on the future feed;
And, if your patience will permit,
  I will recite their creed:

"I do believe in dress and ease,
  And fashionable dash.
I do believe in bright rupees,
  And truly worship cash.

"I do believe in marriage quite,
  But don't believe in gents,
Unless you bind them pretty tight
  By way of settlements.

"I do believe entirely in
  The Civil Service ranks:
The best are worth a deal of tin,
  And none exactly blanks.

"But I do believe that marrying
An '*acting*' man is fudge;
And do not fancy anything
Below a '*pucka*' Judge.

"I do believe in scarlet coats,
But chiefly at a ball;
For I have heard that ten-pound notes
Are scarce among them all.

"Still I believe in Brigadiers,
And Staff Corps Colonels, who
Draw pensions in their waning years,
And tidy pensions, too.

"I do believe that if I'm smart,
And do not lose my head,
And cut that thing that's called the heart,
I may a fortune wed.

"But if in love I weakly plunge,
And break my golden rule,
I may as well throw up the sponge,
And write myself a fool."

With these ideas of life and bliss,
And many wrinkles more,
This interesting little Miss
Approached our genial shore.

And when her Pa embraced his kid,
And heard her speak her mind,
He said he thought—by Gad he did!—
Her notions most refined.

And sitting in the garden cool
  To drink his evening cup,
He thought how well that Brighton school
  Had brought his daughter up.

Well—days flew by. Lieutenants sighed,
  And Ensigns tried her much;
Civilian griffins too; but wide
  The berth she gave to such.

A Chaplain, giv'n to croquet, and
  Perhaps a little plain,
Was mad enough to ask her hand:
  He never asked again!

An honest coffee-planter came
  And offered home and heart;
But—no—she'd rather keep her name,—
  That was a likely start!

A smart Assistant-Surgeon, too,
  Appeared upon the field;
But—oh,—that line would never do!
  His fate was quickly sealed.

Then next was seen approaching an
  Uncovenanted-wallah.
"Uncovenanted? Bless the man!
  Well, now, what next would follow?"

Some real substantial offers came,
  Which made her pause, but—"Pish!
She'd time to play a waiting game,
  And land a bigger fish."

She waited; but Collectors did
  Not come in spooney shoals,
And Sessions Judges must have slid
  On purpose to the Poles.

No sign of Brigadiers, and not
  A Staff Corps Colonel;—why,
It really looked as if the lot
  Were growing scarce, or shy.

Whate'er the cause, 'twas plain to sight,
  Without a doubt or quibble,
The bigger fishes didn't bite,
  And didn't even nibble.

In fine, before two years were out,
  It took no gumption nice
To see that if she'd wed, no doubt
  She'd have to 'bate her price.

She did what braver folks must do—
  She bowed to circumstance;
But husbands still kept out of view,
  By some unkind mischance.

The notion seemed to float abroad
  Wherever she had been,
That no one underneath a Lord
  Would satisfy Miss Green.

In launching this upon the wind,
  Fate played a cruel trick;
For Lords are somewhat scarce in Ind,
  And "Sirs" not over-thick.

And now the humbler loves she would
  Have scorned in former days,
The situation understood,
  And went upon their ways.

Lieutenants, Chaplains, Captains gay,
  No longer came in force;
They didn't care, perhaps, to play
  A hand at "last resource."

In sorrow now, and soon in shame,
  Poor Arabella watched
The ruin of her little game;
  Oh, how completely botched!

And with this mental canker goes
  The colour from her cheek;
The mouth gets pinched, and, oh! the nose
  Looks very like a beak.

The eyes grow red with secret tears,
  And as the seasons pass,
Bad only turns to worse—she fears
  To gaze into her glass.

And then the crash, the final one,
  That smiting bitter blow—
The Colonel's Indian work is done,
  And home the Greens must go.

The General Orders praise her Dad;
  The passages are booked;
They sail; and other spins. are glad
  To see her goose is cooked.

O spins.! be warned ere yet too late—
  To coin don't wholly lean,
Unless you wish to meet the fate
  Of Arabella Green.

Don't think too light of honest bids;
  And, mothers, make a rule
That common sense be taught your kids,
  If possible, at school.

TWO FATES.

O DAINTY lady, O lady pale,
  O lady with golden hair,
Why hurries your landau—what doth ail?
  Is it baby propped up there?

How sickly he looks, with his vacant eyes,
  And his fingers twitched in pain!
"You're going? Of course—I well surmise—
  Be quick, or you'll miss the train."

Poor thing, how worried and ill she seems!
  There were tear-drops on her cheek.
O, cruel, cruel the fierce sunbeams,
  To do such harm in a week.

Mother and child struck down by the heat!
  Yes, this is a dreadful year.
Really every soul that you meet
  Looks like a corpse, or near.

Oh, for a breath of a cold, keen air!
  A sniff of the mountain breeze!
To open your mouth and inhale it fair,
  Coming over the seas.

Well, she is lucky—she'll soon be safe,
  Up in the snowy hills;
No reason for her to stay and chafe
  Over hot-weather ills.

Her husband's a Colonel: handsome pay,
  And a pension for after-life.
There's a hitch about *his* getting away,
  But it's easy enough for his wife.

So, dainty lady, be quick and start,
  Put baby into the train;
And thank your God, from your inmost heart
  That you're not a soldier's Jane.

* * * * *

O sickly woman, with haggard face,
  And eyes so full of affright,
Where are you going at that mad pace,
  And what do you clasp so tight?

"It's baby, sir; O God, he will die!
  See, see how wretchedly thin.
The fever's taken him suddenly,—
  Just feel his burning skin.

"I'm taking him over to hospital, there,—
It's cooler than where I live.
If he only could breathe some sweet fresh air,
Oh, sir, what wouldn't I give!

"It's bitter to see your little one
Gasping away its life;
It's bitter—but, sir, what can be done?
I'm only a soldier's wife.

"The doctors are kind, and take such care
Of our children when they fade;
But they cannot quench the fire in the air,
Or freshen the stifling shade.

"I know what it is: I've seen so much
Of other children that died.
O God! that mine should die like such,
For a breath of air denied!"

She hurried on, and she hugged her child,
With a sob, and a look of woe;
And I fear that unchristianly I reviled
The order of things below.

And I wondered whether the doctor or Death
Would ease the child of its pain;
And felt that a prayer were no waste of breath,
Prayed for the soldier's Jane.

FOR ENGLAND HO!

THE morning sun is shining o'er the harbour of Bombay,
And the gallant trooper *Crocodile* is getting under weigh;
Her snowy sides give shelter to a thousand men or so,
My regiment and another; and the word's "For England Ho!"

We've worked our foreign service out, our full apportioned time;
Eleven lagging years we've spent in India's sunny clime,—
Eleven years,—a goodish hole to knock out of a life,
A change-effecting term on soil where cholera is rife.

Yes, change indeed! We left old England full six hundred strong;
And scarce three hundred faces to the ancient roll belong.
Three hundred comrades blotted out! The tribute that we pay
To death and sickness as the price of Oriental sway!

No part we've played in battle scenes, no glory have we won,
We've done our duty quietly, as nowadays 'tis done;
Ours certainly has been the uneventfullest of trades—
A round of drills, diversified with funeral parades.

Ah! full enough of those we've had: the best-known tune of all
Has been, the years we've struggled through, the solemn March in "Saul,"

That hateful, awful melody civilians think so grand,
It tried us week by week until we almost loathed the band.

Well, now they're playing cheerfully—another sort of air,
And the men are cheering lustily as if they all were there.
I'll cheer with them—"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" Another yet—
"Hurrah!" we're going home, thank God! and India we'll forget.

Still, as I cheer I can't expel the sorrow from my mind,
I cannot drown the memory of those we leave behind.
I wave my cap to India, fast sinking in the blue,
But the shadows of my comrades seem to wave me their adieu.

Good-bye, my friends: although the bullet did not lay you low,
A thought, a tear upon your graves, at least your brothers owe;
Ye died for England, though ye died not 'mid the cannon's boom,
Nor any "mention in despatches" glorified your tomb.

The breeze is fair, the sails are spread, the screw goes grinding round,
The hills beyond Bombay are dwindling to a little mound.
One last long look! Farewell, farewell, thou region of the sun!
Old England is before us, and our exile it is done!

GLOSSARY

FOR ENGLISH READERS.

Ah-bah! *a native exclamation.*

Aiē-aiē! *ditto.*

Allah, *Mahometan name for God.*

Ayah, *a native female servant.*

Bahadur, *an honorary title.*

Bandook, *a gun.*

Bandy, *a cart.*

Batta, *an extra allowance to military officers.*

Biles, *oxen.*

Bobheree, *noise, confusion.*

Bowrie, *a well.*

Brandy-pawnee, *brandy and water.*

Bunder, *the Quay, Bombay.*

Burrábur, *alike, uniform, equal, straight, right.* Sub-burrábur, *all right, is a common expression, particularly among servants and Sepoys.*

Burra-khana, *a big feed—a State dinner.*

Chit, *a letter.*

Chokee, or Chowkee, *a police station.*

Chokra, or Chockra, *a boy; equivalent to "garçon."*

Chuckler, *native shoemaker.*

Collector, *chief civil officer of a district; a Member of the Indian Civil Service; generally combining duties of magistrate with revenue jurisdiction.*

Cuscus tatty, *a mat of the cuscus plant placed in front of a door or window, and kept continually wet to cool the apartment.*

Dacoits, *professional robbers.*

Deckho, *look here, see.*

Dhobie, *a washerman.*

Dhoolie, *a variety of palanquin hung from a pole; used in the hills and in army service.*

Dirzee, *a native tailor.*

Dustoor, *custom, habit.*

Fakeer, *a man under religious vows.*

Forbes, *a noted Hindostanee manual.*

Gharry, *a carriage.*

Ghora-wallahs, *grooms.*

Gup, *talk, gossip.*

Horse dawk's laid, *a dawk is said to be laid when arrangements have been made to have horses in readiness at posting stations.*

Hubble-bubble, *a pipe, the stem of which is fixed in a cocoanut-shell, filled with water, through which the smoke is drawn, causing a bubbling noise.*

Humayscha, *always.*

Jaldi-jao, *go quickly.*

Khansamah, *the head servant in a Bengal household; answering nearly to the Madras butler.*

Kitmutgár, *the servant who waits at table, and looks after his master's uniforms, clothes, &c.—goes on errands—answers the door.*

Koob-malloom-hi, *it is well known.*

Kubbur, or Khubbur, *news, information.*

Kupperdar, you soor, *take care, you pig.*

Logue, *people.*

Mahlee, *a gardener.*

Maidan, *a park or open plain.*

Masulah boat, *a boat used at Madras, where the surf is very high and dangerous.*

Maty, *an indoor servant peculiar to the Madras Presidency, who looks after the plate and table linen and furniture, &c., and assists in waiting.*

Mofussil, *a term generally applied to out-stations, in contradistinction to the head-quarters of a magistrate.*

Mohur, *an Indian gold coin—value about sixteen rupees.*

Moonshee, *a teacher of native languages; also a title of respect.*

Mufti, *civilian dress—the opposite of official uniform.*

Nautch, *a dancing performance.*

Nuckul, *Hindostanee for a tale, anecdote, or narrative.*

Nullah, *a ditch, a ravine.*

Oordoo, *another expression for Hindostanee.*

Ooty, *abridgment of* Ootacamund, *a sanatarium in the Neilgherry Hills.*

Overalls, *trousers.*

Paddy-fields, *rice-fields.*

Peons, *messengers.*

Pillao, *a dish composed of boiled fowl, rice, &c.*

Pucka, *brick or stone, in contradistinction to mud; used commonly to denote anything certain, substantial. When used in connection with such a word as appointment* (a pucka *appointment*), *it signifies that the person holding the appointment is* finally *and formally appointed to it, and that he is not merely* temporarily *possessed.*

Punkah, *a large fan suspended from the roof of every Indian room.*

Punkah-wallah, *the man or boy that pulls the punkah.*

Raggee, *a crop of grain.*

Raj, *government.*

Ráma, *a demigod; the hero of the popular epic, the* Rámayána.

Rattan, *a kind of cane.*

Sahib, *the term usually applied to European gentlemen.*

Salaam, "*peace,*" *the common salutation in India, and the usual verbal answer or acknowledgment of a letter sent by bearer. In some cases also it corresponds with our "thank you;" and, when used as a salutation, with our "good morning!"*

Sammy marks, *native indication of caste, exhibited on the forehead in the shape of lines or round patches the size of a fourpenny piece, drawn with white or coloured clay.*

Schandah-bote utcha, *oh, glorious!—very good!*

Shikar, *sport.*

Shikaree, *a sportsman.*

Sicca coin, *native standard coin.*

Sircar, *the Government.*

Sircar backsheesh, *the gratuity allowed by Government to officers passing the Higher Standard.*

Syce, *a groom.*

Telugu, *taboo.*

Tiffin, *lunch.*

Tom-tom, *a drum usually played with the* fingers.

Topee, *a hat.*

Tumasha, *a show, an entertainment.*

Wah! wah! *an exclamation of surprise at anything strange or wonderful.*

Wallah, *term associated with employment.*

H. S., *the Higher Standard; an examination in one of the native languages (Hindostanee generally being taken up) prescribed by Government, without passing which no military officer can be eligible for a staff appointment. A gratuity is given to successful candidates.*

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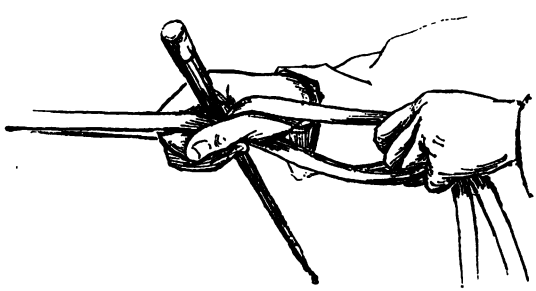

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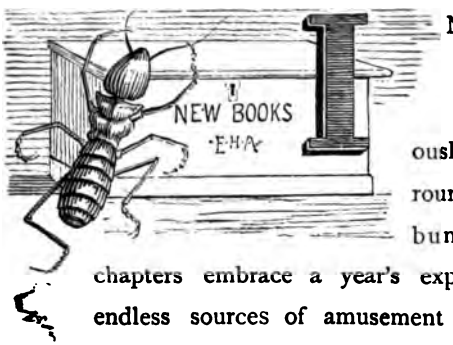

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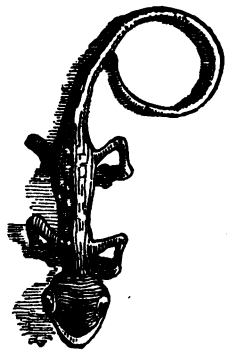

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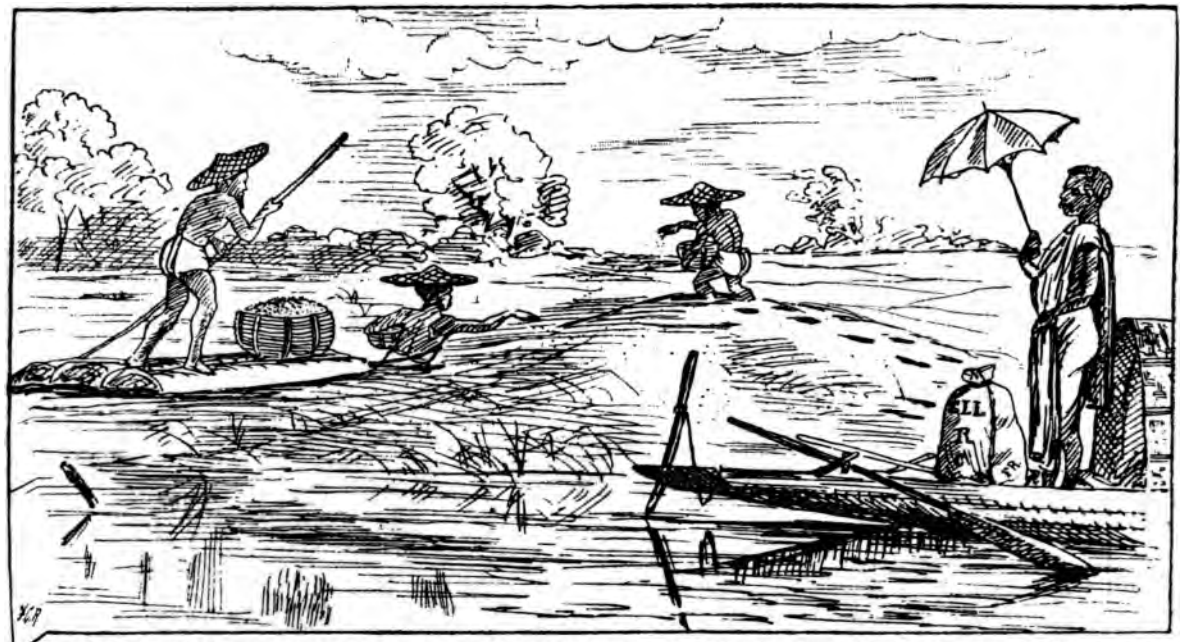

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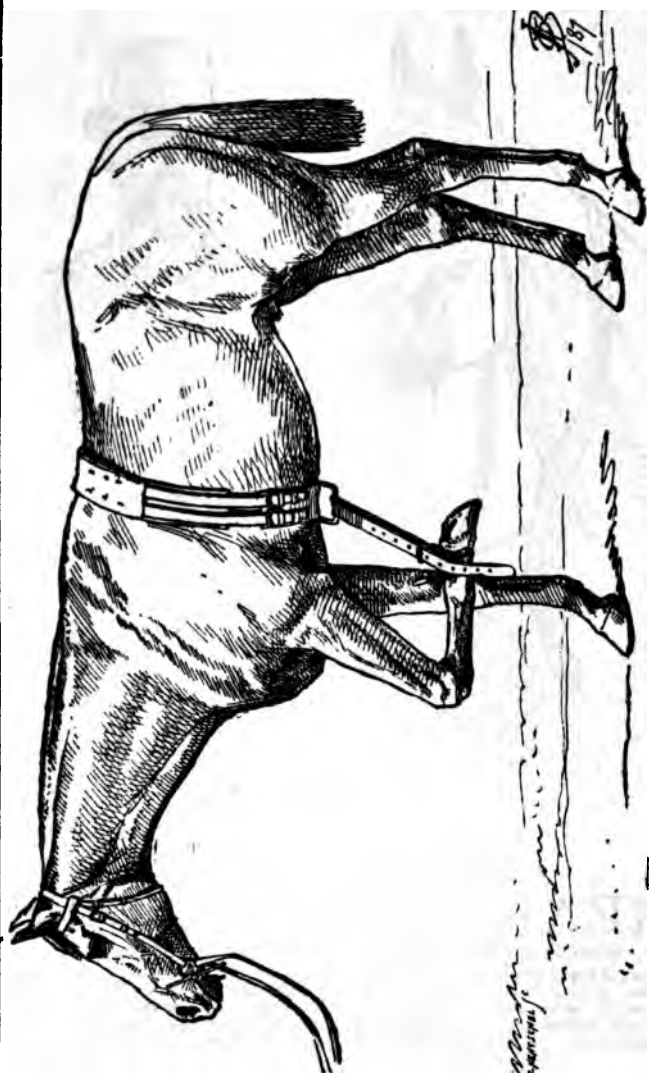

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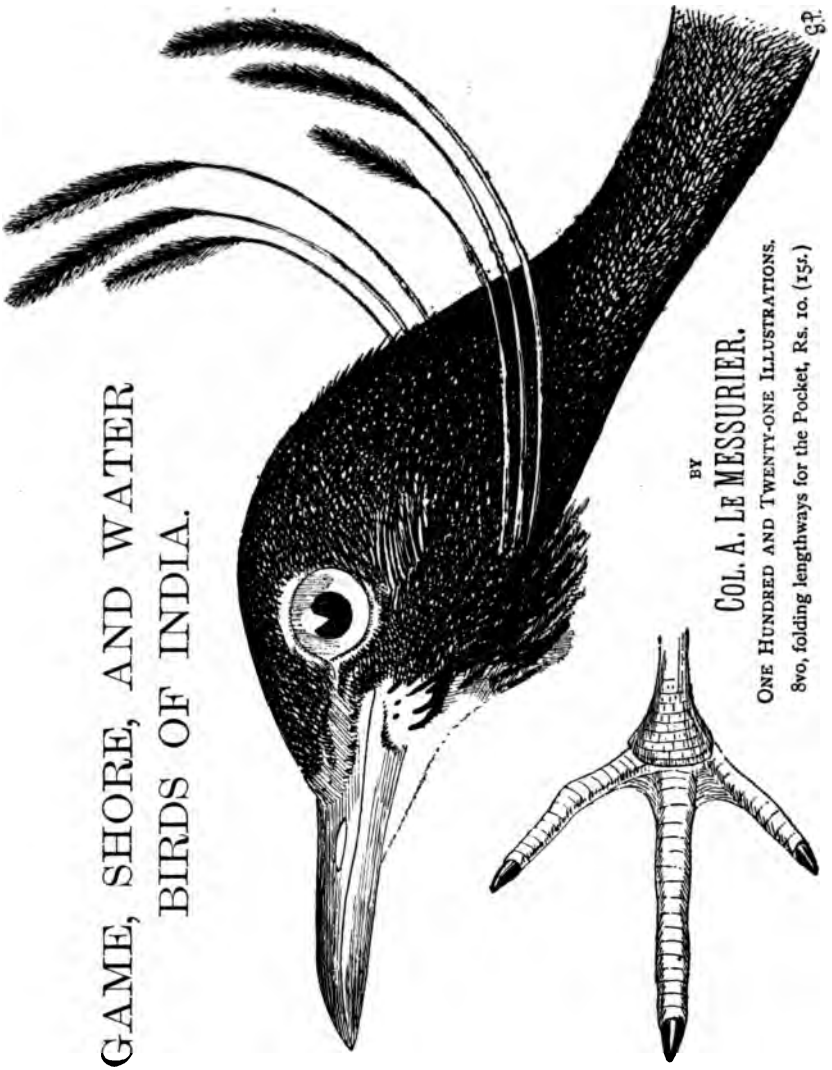

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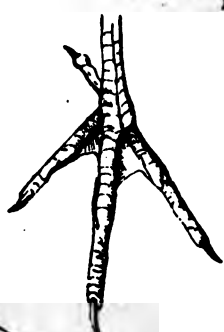

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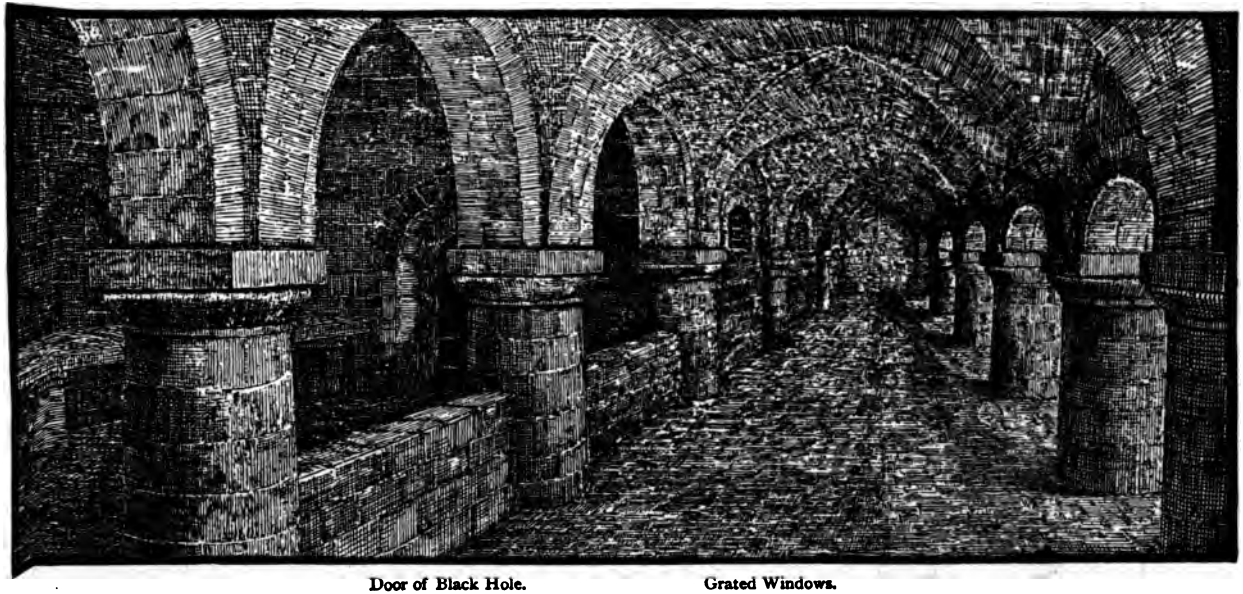

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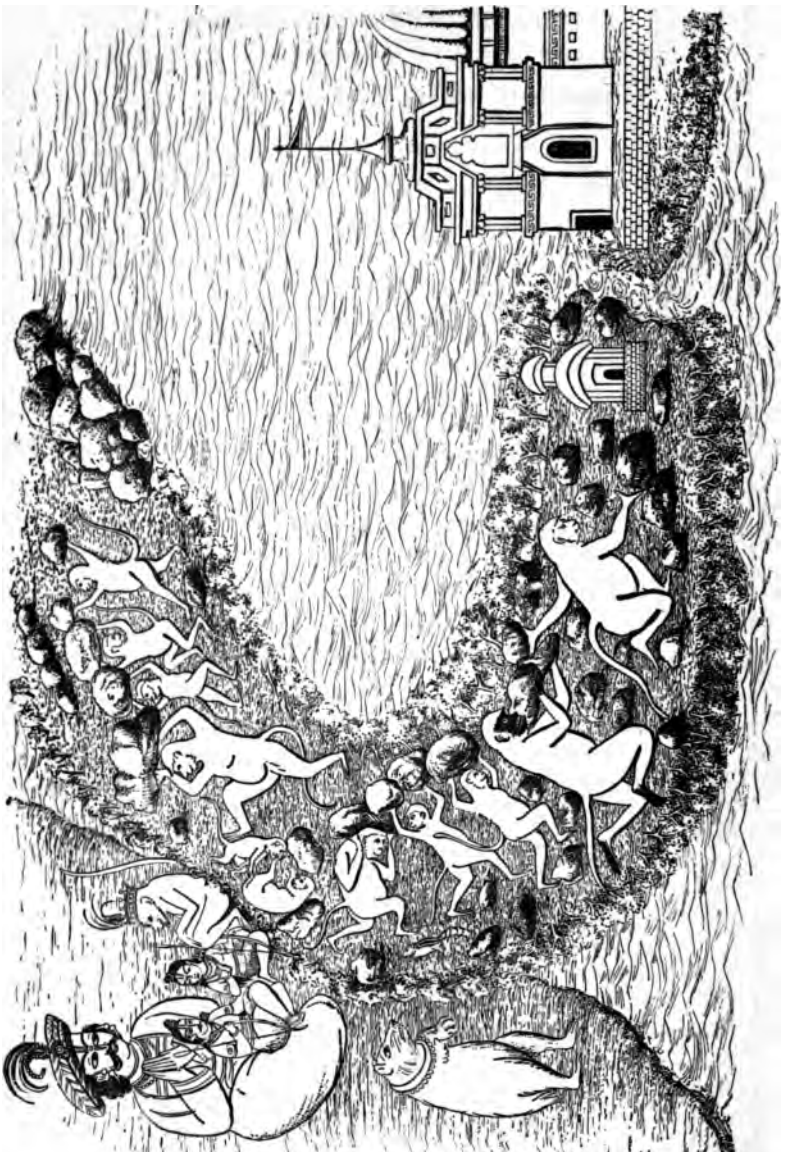

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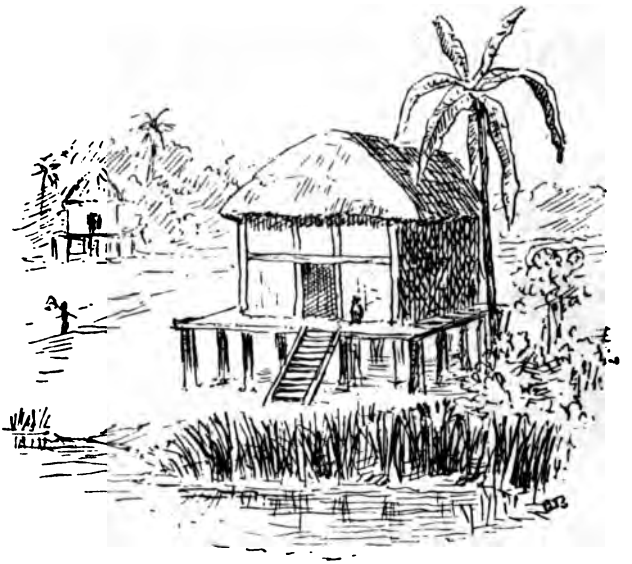

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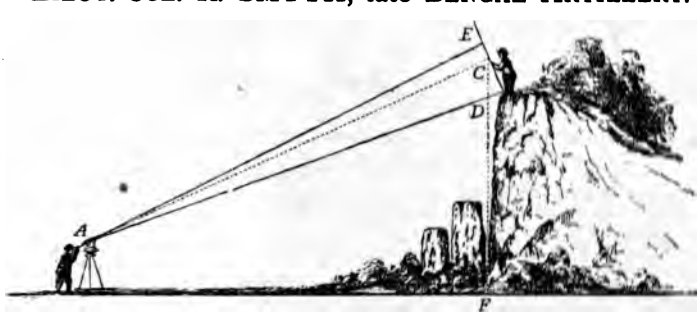

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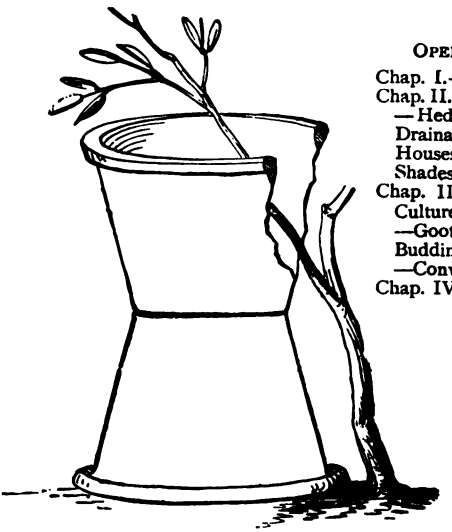

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"Every year sees the Directory grow in size, and advance in utility. This year we have a portly volume which suggests the possibility of its shortly emulating its unwieldy prototype, Kelly's London Directory. Before everything, the volume before us is in reality what it professes to be—a Directory for India. Besides an enormous mass of information of the purely Directory kind, which must have taken a world of labour to collect and collate, the volume comprises complete Army Lists for Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, including the volunteers; lists of officers in the various Government Departments; lists of the Tea, Indigo, Coffee, and other estates in the country; and much valuable information regarding the Telegraphs, Postal Rules, Law Courts, Charities, and a host of other subjects. Nothing more strikingly represents the change that has come over India in recent years than this great Directory. Here is seen at a glance the vast development of our industries, the growth of the white population, the increased pressure of competition, and all the manifold interests which go to make up the complex fabric of Anglo-Indian life in these days."